

Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University

Fall Semester 2015-2016

Exchange Report

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BBA in Information System & Finance



August



After finishing my internship, friends started having farewell lunch and dinner with me. I was very busy during the last week of August. Time went so fast that finally I really had to leave Hong Kong. I was mentally not ready for the exchange. First time flying alone for 14 hours and first time leaving parents for half year.

On 25th August 2015 at 8pm, I arrived at Amsterdam Schiphol Airport. I registered the pickup service organized by ESN (an international student union). The service is free and they offer shuttle bus driving from Schiphol airport to the student dorm. I did not have to worry about anything as soon as I found the ESN booth at Schiphol and I met up my buddy Rosanne after a short while. She helped me pick the heavy luggage. They had a party for new comers on that night but I was too tired (jet lag) and went straight back to my dorm. :p

For the remaining days of August, I managed to set up my Dutch bank account (for getting the refund from my VISA application). They issue you a debit card which is really convenient for shopping in Netherlands and travelling in other countries as well. I also managed to get a Dutch number and subscribed to monthly data plan.

September

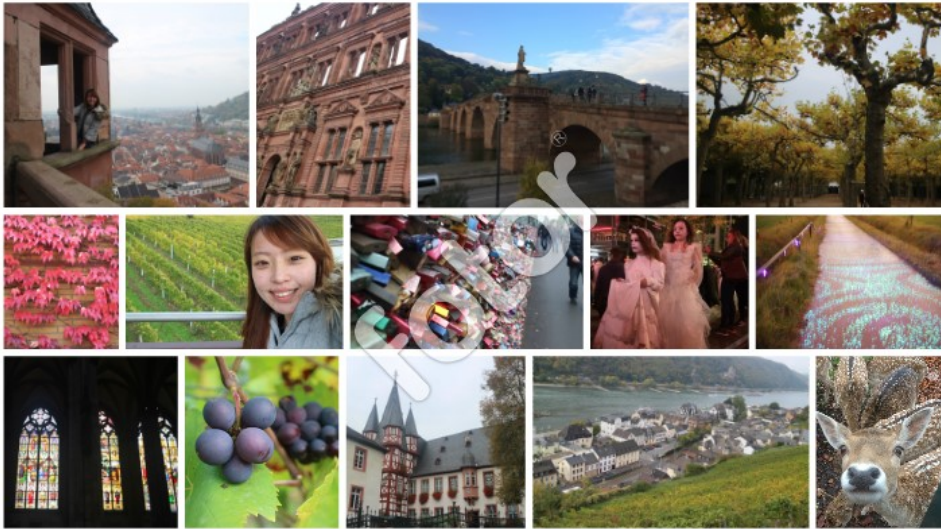
RSM is under trimester system. The first trimester is between September and mid-November. So courses from RSM ended quite quickly. But for other faculty like Media & Communication, Economics, they are totally different cases. Unlike UST, courses at RSM usually last for ~2.5 hours. But they always have breaks so it is not that horrible. Regarding the atmosphere of classes in Netherlands, Dutch students are indeed like HK students, most of them do not interact with instructor! :p But they are more hardworking than I thought.

I did not have packed timetable in Netherlands so I could really slow down my pace in there. In September, I managed to bike to school, train station, and supermarket as well. Bicycle is really an important part of the daily life of a Dutch. In Rotterdam, well-built bicycle paths are on everywhere so cycling here is really enjoyable and safe! Especially in autumn when yellow and red leaves are everywhere. :) But most bikes in Netherlands have only the pedal break which is quite different from bikes in Hong Kong and they always

prefer tall bikes, i.e. you can only touch the ground with the tip of your toes when sitting on the bike! That challenged me a lot.

During mid-Autumn festival, I celebrated with friends from Hong Kong and Singapore. We still have mooncakes there and we went to the rooftop of one of the friend's dorm. The moon was huge and we were chasing the Red Moon until 4am and it was unforgettable.

October



Last month I travelled around in Netherlands and also Belgium (which is only 2 hours going from the Netherlands). This month, I managed to travel alone (a thing on my bucket list! Haha!) It was not smooth but it is a kind of experience that is worth to try. I took BlaBlaCar to Cologne and it was actually a good chance to meet different people. Then I went to Frankfurt for 4 days. There are small cities like Rudesheim, Heidelberg near Frankfurt. They are all beautiful though they are even better during Christmas because usually there will be Christmas markets in front of churches in December. I spent my Halloween in Rotterdam and i joined a big event called Zombie walk in Rotterdam. It was fun that people went crazy on the street. They even scared the drivers on the road.

November

For the exams here, there are some slim notes available on sale. They are quite useful for getting a pass. Dutch students are generally more helpful on academic than Hong Kong students. They have Facebook group having all students, for example 'IBA 2015-2016 year 2'. They will ask questions in that group and many students responded to every questions. In the late November, I joined a trip hosted by Wonderlust (another student organization) going to Austria, Hungary, Slovakia. Food in Eastern Europe were cheap and delicious. But the security in Eastern Europe are generally not good that one of my friend got her mobile phone stolen.

General Exchange Information

Visa Procedures

In May, RSM requires incoming exchange students to submit documents for visa application. The charge for applying both Visa and the resident permit is around 375 euros in total. For students who hold Hong Kong passport (non-EU), we have to deposit 3000 euros into the school bank account through oversea remittance in May, to ensure we have sufficient financial support for our stay in Netherlands. This amount will be refunded into your Dutch bank account in mid-September. While for students holding BNO/ British/EU passports, they do not need to deposit 3000 euros. However, resident permit is still required for staying over 3 months in Netherlands.

Orientation Activities

There is Orientation Week for incoming exchange or international students in late August. It is organized by ESN and it is not compulsory. While RSM requires incoming exchange students to participate an orientation day on 27th August (exact date can be changed every year), we have to pay 50 euros online by credit card before August.

We did some city hunting and enjoyed our tea time with the great port view of Rotterdam. I was the only UST business student at RSM and I did met friends from the orientation day.

International Services & Activities

RSM often send emails to exchange students for various events. Activities like the welcome party, the white party (dressing white to attend!), Port Visit, Halloween party and also a farewell dinner. They are all funded by the school and are free of charge. The Port Visit was informative and it is great way to explore the largest port in Europe! There will be a free ferry ride for you to explore the port in Rotterdam and feel the breeze.

Accommodations

There will be an email in early April informing about the housing accommodation. There are both on-campus and off-campus student dormitory offered by SSH (a company take care of student dormitory). BUT the number of rooms for incoming exchange students are NOT sufficient, but it is very common for exchange students to rent places through websites like Housinganywhere.com, Nestpick or Facebook group 'Housing in Rotterdam', Etc. . On-campus dormitory are always very popular although the rental price is expensive (500euros+ each month).

I was the unlucky one who could not grab any dormitory of SSH but I have no regrets on renting my dormitory. The rent is much cheaper (420 euros) and the owner lent her bicycle to me for free for the half year. From my dorm, it is in between the city center and RSM which I think it is perfect for going to school and going out during free time. it takes less than 5 minutes bike to the school and 10 minutes bike to the

nearest train station. So my advice is: living off-campus with a bike (you can rent in bike shop later) is way better than living on-campus.

Course Registration

We have to inform RSM our choices of courses in May also. We can choose courses from business faculty and other faculty as well. Places for each course is sufficient and student do not need to be rushing to grab places like what we do in Hong Kong. In August, there will be email guiding you steps to officially register the courses. It is pretty easy and at that time, you can already contact your buddy (you will be given their emails) if you have problems on course registration or anything about RSM and Netherlands.

Teaching & Assessment Methods

The class sizes of IBA program are usually big. Campus size is smaller than UST so it is easy to find your classroom. Courses are not demanding though the Dutch students are quite hardworking in my opinion. But courses available in Fall semester are less (be careful because courses approved in the course equivalency database are NOT necessarily available for each semester). Students are allowed to choose courses beyond our faculty (RSM), BUT the overall number of courses you take in other faculties should not exceed the number of RSM courses you have chosen.

There are minor program offered by RSM. Their course content are usually more specific to marketing, finance, information system, management. They are 15 ECTS each and consist of lectures (attendance required), report, exams, and presentation. However, UST students are only allowed to transfer at maximum 4 credits for each courses. So you have to carefully consider whether to take the minor or not.

BAB26 Philosophy of Science

This course is the sequel of Methodology (BAP073). Both courses teach about philosophy (e.g. what is reality? VS How we should study the reality?). It will be quite abstract with many philosophy words which we seldom use, so it is better to take both Methodology and this course together. There were two essay assignments in this course which were not difficult to pass. Every year 2 students needed to take this course. Attendance is not required though you will not be hard to self-study those philosophy concepts.

BAB27 Leadership, Sustainability & Governance

This course had one final exam held in early October and three dilemma meetings. The dilemma meetings were interesting. It was like an oral discussion in a group of 20 students. In early September, all students need to register their desired sections for dilemma meetings in October. But places are very sufficient so students do not need to be rushed to choose their sections. Before dilemma meetings, we were given cases or scenarios concerning business ethics and social responsibility to study and prepare for later discussion. The exam is mostly memorization of all the powerpoint contents. The written exam contains both MC and long questions (quite a lot). The passing rate of this course is usually extremely low (for my year, it is only 50% of people can pass the exam).

CM9003 Cultural Influences on Communication

This course belongs to Media & Communication faculty. I enjoyed this course a lot. The instructor was inspiring and respected the students' opinions a lot. In every lecture the professor would have different topics like Language, Education, Love and Democracy. He likes showing movies to illustrate the cultural influences. Instead of related readings, he recommended movies and novels for students to watch and read after the class. There were one midterm online exam and one final exam in form of essays. Attendance is required but you will love to attend the class!

BAP073 Methodology

This is a compulsory course for year one student. Through teaching philosophy of knowledge, students started to work on a research proposal by adopting what we have learnt during the class. Though we had experiences on doing projects at UST, this course gives the foundation of doing researches and projects. After learning Methodology, I have better idea on the reason people need to do research and have ways to be more systematically explore new knowledge. Video lectures are available and attendance is not required.

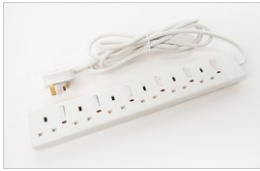
Cost/Expenses

Items	Estimated/ Actual Amount (HK\$)
Airfare	9546
Accommodation	16530
Travelling	30000
Daily expenses (transportation, grocery)	18000
VISA and resident permit	2610
Total	76686

For daily necessities, I usually did grocery shopping in Albert Heijn (big brand of supermarket in Netherlands). Prices are more or less the same as Hong Kong (or even cheaper!) So I suggest not bringing any daily grocery from Hong Kong. And some students said water bottle is a luxury in Netherlands. I brought my own bottle from Hong Kong though I found water bottles are actually quite cheap in Primark (a chained store in Netherlands) :p

There are packing lists available online that you may refer. Below I will list the **Items that are important but I forgot to bring:**

- small suitcase/ backpack (for short trip)
- hairdryer
- waist pack (to keep your money during travelling)
- travel adapters x2 (in case one of them does not work)
- extension socket



<- using in Rotterdam



<- smaller for travelling



-stomach pills (important because you will always eat too much :p)

Climate

Good weather is precious in Netherlands. People said that Netherlands is like a 'crying baby' and I do agree because it always goes raining so suddenly. It is better to bring a pair of boots for rainy days. But I would say going to see windmill village in sunny days is definitely a must!

Communication

Dutch people speak very good English, because learning English is compulsory in their education (just like Mandarin in Hong Kong). Some of my friends went for Dutch-speaking courses but I did not.

Good Luck! I hope you will like Rotterdam and also the whole Netherlands! :p Find me on Facebook or ask SBM office for my email address to ask more about my exchange journey!

