

Exchange Report Tilburg University (The Netherlands) Spring 2017



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Part I: Monthly Activity Log

January

I arrived Tilburg on the arrival day. On that day, student representatives will pick you up at the Tilburg University train station. They will drive you to the university and carry your luggage. You will register your bank account, immigration affairs and the TOP week (orientation) there.

The TOP week usually lasts for a week. There will be welcoming and opening ceremony and you will be divided into groups so you will have the chance to meet other exchange students from different countries. There will be different workshop, orientation activities and drinking parties every day. So you are highly recommended to join the orientation to meet new friends.

February

School started on 1 February but the workload wasn't big. There will be a carnival holiday for the Southern part of the Netherlands, which lasts for around two weeks. Many exchange students grabbed this opportunity to travel around. And for me I went to Norway and Germany with my friends.

March

Some courses would have mid-term examination in late March but as I don't have any, so I got time to prepare for my project work. Project deadlines are usually in Early April and you usually have to group yourself, so you better know someone in your class. There will be a short study break in late March, so you can well prepare for academic matters during that period.

April

There are two major events in April: The Keukenhof and the King's Day, which you shouldn't miss out! On King's day, everyone will dress in orange and celebrate in the street, especially in Amsterdam. Parties and festivals are everywhere, which let you fully feel the lifestyle of the Netherlands.

May

Final examinations take place in May. You do not have much long holidays, so you better plan your schedule ahead and strike a balance between your trips and study. Business courses usually do not have exams on the same day. My exams were on late May, so I still had the chance to go to some short trips with my exchange buddies.

June

Most business courses would have ended in May but as I had took a course from TSB, so I still got an exam in early June. I left Tilburg after my last examination. Remember pack your luggage and buy souvenirs earlier to avoid being so in rush. Some of my exchange friends extend their flat rental dates (Verbs) so you can also do the same if you plan to travel after the semester ends.

PART II – General Exchange Information

Visa Procedures

If you hold a Hong Kong passport, the Tilburg exchange office will contact you around a month after you hand in your exchange application form. You will have to go to the Netherlands Consulate in Wanchai to finish your visa application.

Orientation Activities

You will be asked for the availability in joining the TOP week (Tilburg Orientation Program). It is a 5-day activity which costs around 50 euros. Dinner, drinking and activities are all included. You will have the chance to meet friends from different countries in your group!

International Services and Activities

I*ESN is the biggest student organization for international and exchange students. You can join their membership and go to their organized club in the city centre for a free drink.

Accommodations

I lived in Verbs (many exchange students live there). It is a 5-minute walk from the university. Make sure you register for the dorm ASAP as some of my exchange friends did the registration later than expected, then they were not given the accommodation. As there will be parties in the pantry every Tuesday, if you prefer being quiet, you may rent other accommodation which near to the Westermarkt.

Course Registration

You will have to submit your study plan before your arrival day. However, it's always free to add/drop any courses (usually within 2 weeks of the start of semester).

They use a system named Blackboard, where you can find course documents and announcement there, which is similar to HKUST canvas.

Teaching and Assessment Methods

The teaching style is different from that in HKUST as there is more small group tutorials there where you can interact with the instructor in class. To pass a course, you have to obtain 5.5/10. Many courses are absolute grading, so if you study hard, you will be fine. There will be resit session in June/July.

Finance and Banking

For non-EU students, the consulate will require you to transfer around 6000 euro to the school as a financial proof before the arrival day. You will receive this money only in mid-February, so make sure you bring enough cash before you can receive the bank ATM card (with 6000euro inside). When you leave Tilburg, you can simply go to the bank office and tell them you want to close the account.

Health and Safety

Netherlands, generally, is a safe country to stay in, especially in Tilburg.

Transportation

The most frequent transportation you will use in Tilburg is bicycle. Everyone owns a bicycle here so you may buy a bike there upon your arrival day. Second hand bikes usually sell at around 50-80 euros. NS Intercity is train system where you usually take to travel across cities. You may buy an OVchip card to enjoy a slight discount as transportation in the Netherlands is expensive.

Communication

Many Dutch knows how to speak English and their accents are easy to be listened. Even if you are in supermarkets/shops, you can still find it easy to communicate with staff using English.

PART III – Items to Bring

- Sufficient warm clothes (Heattech/ waterproof jacket)
- Cash
- Universal Adapters
- Insurance copy
- Copies of identity
- Medicine

PART IV – Useful links and Contacts

- I*ESN Marketspace (Facebook group)
 - Where you can sell and buy bikes/daily necessities from the Tilburg community
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/193215294148222/>
- Exchange office
<https://www.tilburguniversity.edu/education/exchange-programs/contact/>
- Student Desk (where you can ask for administrative enquiries)
<https://www.tilburguniversity.edu/students/studentdesk/>
- Blackboard (Portal login)
https://sso.uvt.nl/login?service=https%3A%2F%2Fedubb.uvt.nl%2Fwebapps%2Fbb-auth-provider-cas-bb_bb60%2Fexecute%2FcasLogin%3Fcmd%3Dlogin%26authProviderId%3D_102_1%26redirectUrl%3Dhttps%253A%252F%252Fedubb.uvt.nl%252Fwebapps%252Fportal%252Fexecute%252FdefaultTab%26globalLogoutEnabled%3Dtrue

Feel free to contact me for further questions! Facebook: Christie Tam.