

Exchange report

Erasmus University Rotterdam, the Netherlands



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Spring 2017

Monthly Activity Log

January



I arrived Holland on the very first day of 2017. Our university actually provided pick-up service from Schiphol Airport to the campus but I chose to take the train which is quite convenient. I arrived the on-campus dorm in the afternoon and got plenty of time to settle down before the orientation session was held the day after. During the orientation, I met other exchange students and got some background information of the school.

February



While getting used to the new environment, I went to other Dutch cities like Den Haag with friends to visit the Mauritshuis and do some shopping. I recommend getting an annual museum pass for unlimited visit to more than 400 museums. I also arranged a 5-day trip to Dublin with other HK exchange students.

March



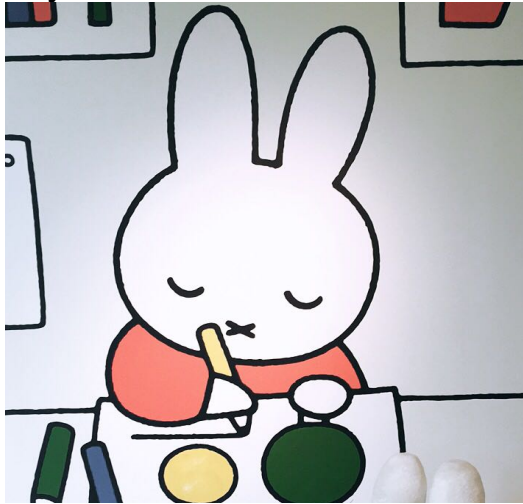
There were 3 exams in March so I spent most of my time revising and completing assignments, but as we didn't have a lot of classes to attend in Erasmus, I arranged another short trip to Poland. Although I stayed in Warsaw, I took a 5-hour train ride to Krakow to visit the Auschwitz concentration camp. It was an enjoyable trip with good music in mini salons and reasonably priced food. I also bought a second-hand bike as the Netherlands is a bike-friendly country, and cycle tracks are well-organized which make cycling a great transportation option.

April



The weather was getting warmer and Keukenhof, a famous floral garden was opened to public again. I recommend spending at least an afternoon in the park to walk around and take some pictures. The King's day was on the 27th April and people in the country wear orange to celebrate the King's birthday.

May



As it was almost time to return, after my trip to Barcelona and Copenhagen, I went to other Dutch places like Utrecht and Amsterdam. Utrecht is not as popular as Amsterdam but I went there twice as it is a peaceful city with a lot of outdoor restaurants near the canals. Dick Bruna's Miffy museum and studio are also in Utrecht. At the end of the month, I went to Hoge Veluwe National Park for a 3-hour bike trip.

June



I spent most of my time at the beginning of the month to study for exams and sell my stuff on online markets. I returned to Hong Kong on 16th.

General Exchange Information

Orientation Activities

An orientation day was organized by RSM (Rotterdam School of Management). Students were split into groups for a 3-hour city tracing. The activity was held within Rotterdam and was designed for us to gain a better understanding of the city, but exchange students were generally not very attentive. We also had a group dinner on the same day.

International Services & Activities

Erasmus Student Network (ESN) will organize trip to nearby European countries or Dutch cities from time to time. During my stay, ESN arranged a short trip to Germany and a boat trip in Amsterdam on King's day. These trips/ activities are reasonably priced and you get chance to meet other exchange students from other faculties.

Accommodations

On SSH (<https://www.sshxl.nl/en/cities/rotterdam>), a student housing network in Rotterdam, you can apply for two types of dormitories: on-campus dorms and off-campus dorms. I applied for Hatta, which is an on-campus one. It was new and spacious. I shared my flat with another female flat mate but had my own bedroom and kitchen. We also shared a toilet and a shower room. The bad thing about Hatta is its expensive laundry service. It costed me around 5 euros every time. One of my friend lived in Casa (an off-campus dorm) and said it only took her 5 minutes by bike or tram to school, and laundry is free.

Courses Registration

You will receive emails from the International office of RSM for course registration before commencement of school. In the emails, available courses are listed out and you need to enroll on the school's website within a stated period on a first come first serve basis. Exchange students of RSM can also enroll for courses of other faculties but there will be restrictions on the number (usually one course per non-RSM faculty). If you wish to do so, you have to contact the corresponding faculty and apply separately. There will be a 1-week add/drop period at the beginning of your trimester.

Courses I took:

RSM courses

BAB18 – Strategic Management

BAB17 – Leadership, Sustainability and Governance

BAE06 – International Business: The Dutch Way

BAD01 – Innovation Management

Non-RSM courses

CM2026 Intercultural communication at work

CM2072 Consumer Behavior and Marketing Action

Teaching & Assessment Methods

Passing requirement and grading methods varies among courses, but generally you need to score 5.5/10 to get a pass and for some courses you have to pass the exams as well as assignments. You are expected to do a lot of readings and course preparation

on your own even though you won't have a lot of lessons in Erasmus so think twice before you arrange trips or other activities and ensure you can handle the workload.

Sports & Recreation Facilities

Students can join the membership of the gym and use the facilities and join a variety of sport classes like Zumba, HIIT, steps and boxing. You may also join the sports clubs of Erasmus which regular practices are arranged.

Finance & Banking

The Dutch currency is Euro. You may need other currencies if you are traveling during your exchange but it can easily be done in airports. You will need a Dutch account when you arrive for daily transactions and rent payment. The most common banks are ABN Amro, ING and Rabobank.

Health & Safety

Rotterdam is a relatively safe city, but the nearest metro station (Kralingse Zoom) can get really dark so if possible do not walk alone at night. Also, bikes can be easily stolen if you lock them on street so get a better lock.

Food

Food can be quite expensive in the Netherlands so most of the students cook their own food to save money. Other than European restaurants, I recommend China Town Dim Sum Restaurant on West-Kruiskade and all-you-can-eat sushi place Sumo in Markthal.

Transportation

People usually travel within Rotterdam by tram, metro and bike. Going to the city center from school costs around 2 euros, so you may want to buy a second-hand bike and save some transportation fees. If you are going to other Dutch cities, you can buy cheaper return train tickets online for 7 euros only.

Climate

Weather is quite unpredictable and it rains quite frequently so bring a pair of waterproof shoes and jacket with you.

Communication

I have tried the mobile service of Labara and Vodafone. Labara's price is much cheaper but only supports 3G network. Vodafone provides a wide variety of packages and supports 4G.

Items to Bring

- Passport
- Birth Certificate
- Hard/ soft copies of identity documents
- Cash (for the first month)
- Phone/ Laptop
- Letter of acceptance
- Medicine

Useful Links and Contacts

Erasmus exchange programme:

<http://www.eur.nl/english/exchange/>

Train service provider:

<http://www.ns.nl/en>

ESN:

<http://www.esn-rotterdam.nl/>