

Exchange Report

Fall 2017 – 2018

Rotterdam School of Management,
Erasmus University,
the Netherlands



ROTTERDAM SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT
ERASMUS UNIVERSITY



Ivy Woo Ka Yu

Bachelor of Business Administration
Information Systems and Operations Management

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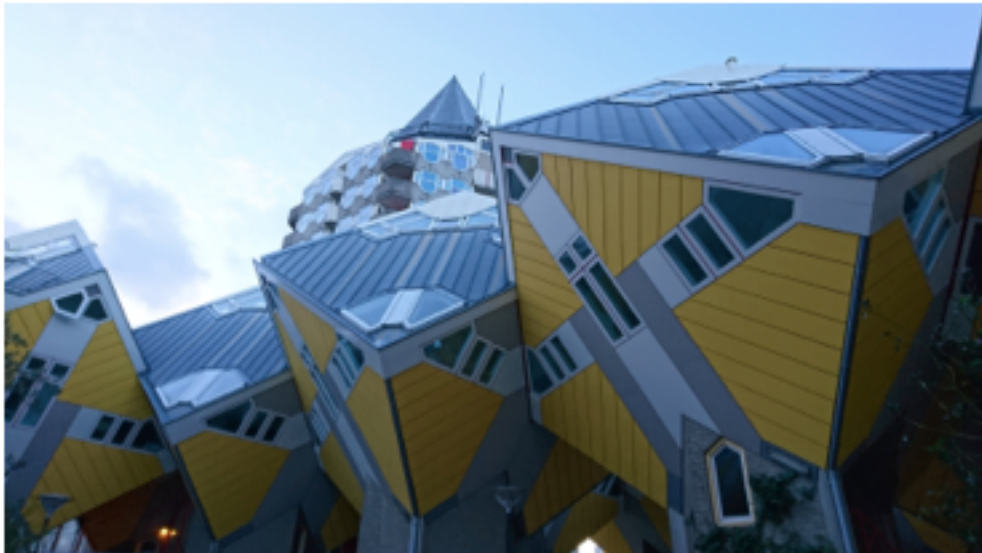
1.1 September

Arriving later than normal to the others students due to the delayed visa, I started off my exploration on the Erasmus campus, diving into the new study environment right away. While settling down with miscellaneous matters like bank account and residence permit, in my free time I also wanted to explore the city Rotterdam itself, though the weather was not always nice, but still!

Renting myself a bike from Swapfiets (in which they kindly ordered a new model for my size as I was exceptionally small to Dutch people), I cycled through very developed main biking paths to near the city center. It was a bit scary I scratched my knees twice the first month due to the fact that I could not stand really on the ground with my feet when I was on the bike. Otherwise, the roads were not busy since Rotterdam was basically just full of students.

Of course I went to all those famous places suggested by the bloggers online and my local friends met during the orientation days/ in the class.

The Cube Houses - Blaak



Markthal - Blaak



1.2 October

The weather started to get colder when I was very busy with the assignments exams of courses in my faculty and the other ones I registered from Social Science for my minor in humanities. They clashed too much as they were from different faculties and they did not have exactly the same academic system – RSM works in trimester system while SHCC works on 5-block system.

As a results, I did not have time for every course and I failed hard on the midterm of my business course which required a lot of practices on mathematics. The essay assignments I handed in did not get good grades neither as their requirement was a bit different than what we had in HKUST. They focused a lot on whether you quoted many stuff from the literatures instead of your originality. I finally learnt the skills to Dutch essay writing after consulting my Dutch friends and professors on this.

After all the hard work, to reward ourselves, the three students from HKUST went on a wonderful trip to Italy and Austria before the weather would get too bad for the beautiful cities!

Vatican Museum – Rome



Hallstat – Austria



1.3 November

At the beginning of November I had the exams for my courses in SHCC, luckily as I applied the technique for my essays in the exams, I got very satisfactory results to compensate for my bad grades before.

The rest of the month I was pretty free so I went to hang out with the exchange students more. We went to have drinks together before parties and had lots of fun with people from different cultural background! The best of it was that we were all very open-minded that we could talk about everything, from family and cultural background, personal beliefs, to business, politics, and the common moral values in this changing world.

I also jammed with my friends from RSM and we formed a temporary band, me as the vocalist and keyboard with an American rapping and a French doing drums. We went on the monthly open stage in the school pavilion and it was so fun. I was quite nervous and I think I did not sing well at all but the audience loved our cover on Adele's song – Send My Love which we performed in a very different and brand new style.

Open Stage – Erasmus Paviljon



1.4 December

It was exam time till mid-Dec and we were done! I did exceptionally well on the final exams of business courses, luckily. Before I knew, Christmas was already there~ All the European students went back home before Christmas time as this is the most important festival in a year to celebrate with their family, similar to the Lunar New Year here in Chinese culture.

I thought I would be so lonely travelling on my own during Christmas but fortunately my two best friends from France offered me to their homes in Paris during Christmas! Thus I enjoyed an authentically traditional French way of celebrating Christmas – to eat and drink together from 8pm till 2am through Christmas Eve and of course, exchanging presents under the tree~ I was well received by their family members and felt at home, French people are really nice and friendly in general.

The collection of cutlery with great-grandfather's initials engraved



All kinds of French CHEESEEEEEEEEEEE



1.5 January

My sister took her annual leave and came to me from Hong Kong! I took her to explore the city by bike and we went to Berlin, Frankfurt and Cologne in Germany together!

Alte Oper - Frankfurt



Sadly but excitedly, it was time to go back Hong Kong and enjoy the warm weather and great food at home! Though I will always miss the time with my friends in Rotterdam~

2.1 Visa Procedures

RSM provides comprehensive support in visa procedures. They send over an email the detailed instructions on the documents to prepare for and the steps to take for visa applications. An online application form has to be submitted along with other required documents such as passport copies, an Antecedents Certificate and declaration form first. Afterwards if you do not have an IBAN account, you will have to send an amount of money (~5700EUR for 6-month application) to RSM for visa application so as to prove that you have the ability to support your own living during your stay in the Netherlands.

I received the confirmation from the university over the email that the immigration department approved my application quite late in August. Immediately, I made an appointment online with the instructions given in the email with the Netherlands' consulate in Hong Kong. Bring along with your original passport, confirmation letter (e-copy and hardcopy) and a passport photo on the appointment day! After a week, you may pick up your passport at the consulate technically after it has been processed in its office in Singapore/Malaysia to my understanding. However, it was typhoon no.10 and no.8 unfortunately on the week so my visa was, again, delayed. As a result, I needed to reschedule my flight and missed the orientation activities organized by the exchange student society in EUR.

It is still NOT the end of story. After you landed safely in the Netherlands, please go to your nearest Immigration Department (IND) to pick up your residence permit (follow the instructions from your university) which allows you to stay longer than the 90 days in the original Schengen visa you are granted. After the 90 days, remember to bring along your passport AND the residence permit if you go traveling elsewhere, even in Europe.

2.2 Orientation Activities

RSM has its own orientation day which costed me 80EUR which included campus run, ice-breaking games, a trip to the nearest beach and a barbeque meal with drinks there. Several students were assigned to the same exchange ambassador and you could ask him about local practices and the academic culture or tips to study the courses at the university!

The university has the Erasmus Student Network (ESN) which welcomes exchange students a lot to join their activities with good prices!

2.3 International Services & Activities

Again, please follow 2.2 with the ESN activities (on facebook as well) to check out the activities happening.

2.4 Accommodations

I live on campus with the housing reserved for exchange students on SSH. However, you have to be competitive to get the room at the moment the system allows registration. It works on first-come-first-served basis! Make sure, you set the alarm and fight against each other unless you wish to find the accommodation elsewhere.

You could also consider housing in the town and share with someone else. However, I would also recommend SSH as we lived so near to the school which saved us a lot of travelling plus the rent was on the average range and you got everything covered. I was lazy so I preferred SSH so that I did not need to worry about so many things.

2.5 Courses Registration

The course registration works by online email application prior to the semester start. It was quite early so do remember to check your email for interesting courses to register on time.

2.6 Teaching and Assessment Methods

Everything was the same as HKUST except as I mentioned the essay marking criteria was a bit different from what we usually do here. So please note!

2.7 Sports and Recreation Facilities

There is a sports center on campus and you can subscribe to its member for half a year (~120EUR) to get access to the gym and sport skill classes.

2.8 Finance & Banking (including currency / expenses)

The school will provide you with a very detailed cost estimation projection.

2.9 Social Clubs and Networking Opportunities

The above sections summarized all these.

2.10 Health and Safety

Rotterdam is very free from crime, you can walk on the street at midnight and no one cared.

2.11 Food

To be honest, Dutch food is all about bread and herring (correct me if I am wrong) so do not expect too much in this regard.

2.12 Transportation

As I mentioned, please rent a bike as the transportation cost in the Netherlands is extremely high. Renting bike through Swapfiets is the best choice I have found.

2.13 Climate

The Netherlands, especially Rotterdam is well-known for its ever changing weather. It is always rainy and windy all the time and unpredictably. Do not try to understand as no one understands how the weather works there.

2.14 Communication

I got a competitive international bundle (~10EUR per month) for myself from Lycamobile. It was not the fastest but the cheapest with great coverage around Europe.

2.15 Cautionary measures

As I mentioned, be careful with the bikes if you are not so tall, like me :P

Part 3 Items to Bring and Contacts

Apparently, the university provides a full list on this as well so please read the emails and attachments and do your researches. In case you could not find anyone in the university for help, go to Forrest! He is great! (But please try to handle everything professionally yourself first)