

Exchange Report



Tilburg University

CHU, Wing Sum Ellen
Fall 2017

Part 1: Monthly Activity Log

August

I arrived Tilburg on the Registration day. There were student representatives waiting in the Schiphol Airport and they will teach you the way to arrive Tilburg. On the registration day, you are going to open your dutch bank account (which you will receive the money you transferred few months ago) and also register for the Top Week. I highly recommend you to join the Top Week because it is the orientation week for you to meet other exchange students. It was really fun and there were a lot of events throughout the week, beer cantus (must try!), party, pub crawl and so on!



September

School starts at late August, and workload wasn't too heavy. So I got to explore Tilburg a bit and travelled around the Netherlands during weekend. I went to Roermond, Rotterdam, Munich and London with my newly met exchange friends.



October

During mid-October, there was a midterm week for us and we didn't need to go to school during that week. Some of my friends got midterm exams after that week (because their

course is going to end in sem A). I started working on some assignments and projects. During the midterm week I went to Amsterdam and Paris.



November

Most of the presentation, project and assignment deadline took place in November. Since I only took 4 courses, so the workload was still bearable. I haven't been travelling around in November so I spend most of my time with my friends and sometimes studying for finals.



December

Most of the final exams took place in December, resits and some other exams took place before Mid-January. I spent most of the time studying in December (some courses still have class until Mid-December, those started at semB), and my exams were done on the 18th, so I got to travel around Europe before going back to Hong Kong. I went travelling around Eastern Europe and Northern Europe until Mid-January.



January

Since I don't have any exams during January, so I have been travelling around until Mid-January. Our dorm contract ends on the 15th of January, and so I had to leave the place on or before that day. I went to close my bank account and sold my bike before the day I leave.

Part 2: General Exchange information

Visa Procedures

After you have been confirmed by the university, the immigration office of Tilburg University will send you information regarding the Netherlands Visa procedures. Since I am holding the Hong Kong Passport and I will be staying in the Netherlands for more than 3 months, I will need to register for the Visa, known as the MVV. It cost around \$3000 to make the Visa. Once you got the information from the immigration office of TU, just contact the Netherlands Consulate General of Hong Kong. Be sure to do it as early as possible since it took around a month for me to receive the Visa.

Orientation Activities

The top week take place few days after your registration day. I highly recommend you to join the top week because you get to explore around Tilburg and know a lot of exchange students. You get to party every day and as hard as you can during that week! We get to meet our group every week after the Top Week (called "Mentor Dinner") and we had very strong bonding!

International Services & Activities

I*ESN is the largest international student organisation organised by the Dutch students. They organise the mentor dinner every week, and they also organise a club called Carpe Noctem and offer cheap drinks for members to go every week after the mentor dinner. You are required to pay around 50 euros to join their membership in order to go to the bar (but in some occasions you can get in without a membership) and to join their trip around Europe in a cheap price. I didn't join the membership since it is not very helpful to me.

Accommodations

I live in Professor Verbernelaan (called Verbs) which most of the exchange students live in, it is 5 minutes by bike from the University and the supermarket AH. Make sure you register on time that day because there are only limited rooms. They held the mentor dinner every Tuesday in verbs and it might get a bit noisy (but the landlord seems to have banned the Tuesday party at verbs starting from this coming semester). So if you prefer having quiet peaceful time and have not been able to register for verbs, then you can consider Statenlaan (which is opposite to the western market).

Courses Registration

You get to register for courses via the online system, and you will receive the excel of the courses offering for exchange students via email. Make sure to check the syllabus with the credit transfer office to see if you can transfer the credit back to UST.

Teaching & Assessment Methods

Most of the courses have class once per week and it last for around 2 hours. I believe most of the courses do have exam and assignments. I study 4 courses and all of them have projects and exams but I do not have any midterm exams (but depends on the professor).

Sports & Recreation Facilities

There is a sports centre right besides verbs, and you need to pay around 22 euros for a month for the membership. I do enjoy going to the gym since they offer a lot of classes like spinning, yoga, jumping fitness. I go to the gym nearly once per day!

Finance & Banking (including currency / expenses)

You will need to open a Dutch bank account (non-EU students), and the school will need you to transfer around \$5000 before arriving, and once you have the bank account, they will transfer the money to you. The whole process takes around a month, so make sure you bring enough money before you get your bank account set up. It is very convenient to have the debit card because you can just go anywhere cashless and pay by card.

Social Clubs & Networking Opportunities

There are some sports club to join in the sports centre and you could also join the I*ESN for more networking events.

Health & Safety

The Netherlands is quite safe, but you have to be careful of thieves in crowded areas.

Transportation

Get a bike! Most of the students go to school by bike and it is very safe and convenient to go around, since there are bike lanes and drivers are always aware of it. Just make sure if you would like to sell your bike before you leave, keep the receipt because you might not get the amount you were told on the first day. (Happened in the bike shop in Tilburg University, some of my friends only get 5-10 euros back but they were told that they can get 40 euros). So, might just be more convenient to rent a bike from Swapfiet, around 10 euros per month but they have really tall bikes (for people over 165cm)!

Climate

It rains a lot during winter, so bring a waterproof jacket if you are going to bike around in the rain!

Communication

Most of the Dutch are willing to speak in English and they are very good at it, so don't worry about it!

Part 3: Items to bring

- Raincoat/umbrella
- Waterproof jacket
- Passport (and your visa)
- Adaptor
- Cash
- Medicine

Part 4: Useful links and contacts

Links

- <https://apply.tilburguniversity.edu/mix/>
 - o MySaS account, useful when you were registering courses before arriving TU
- <https://www.facebook.com/iesntilburg/>
 - o I*ESN facebook page
- <https://www.facebook.com/groups/193215294148222/>
 - o I*ESN marketplace facebook group, where you can find second hand things and cheaper bikes

Feel free to contact me if you have more questions!

Facebook: Ellen Chu