

EXCHANGE REPORT

ERASMUS UNIVERSITY ROTTERDAM

ROTTERDAM SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT



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Monthly Activity Log

January: I started my exciting exchange journey on January 02, a few days before the official orientation which was held on January 08. This gave me some time to settle in to the new place. I flew to Amsterdam from Hong Kong and then took a train to Rotterdam Centraal Station. From the station I took a tram to the university. I chose to live on campus in a building called Hatta. There are a lot of international students in the building. I met a few other exchange students from Hong Kong on the first day. During the first few days I explored Rotterdam thoroughly. Rotterdam is very famous for its architecture and some of the new buildings have a very unique design. Every Tuesday and Saturday a local market is open in Markthaal in Blaak Station. I would recommend buying your weekly groceries there as the produce is very fresh and the prices are relatively cheaper than purchasing in the supermarkets.



The local market also offers a variety of mouth-watering food which is worth checking out. I visited Utrecht with a couple of friends during the weekend. Netherlands is a very picturesque country. You will find greenery everywhere that gives the place a serene atmosphere. It is also very common to see bicycles parked everywhere. Majority of the people ride bikes in the Netherlands. I would recommend renting a bike as it is a very convenient mode of transport for students. The classes in RSM are held usually once a week and the students are expected to be prepared for the class through weekly readings. I also attended ESN Intro

Days which included a bunch of events where you can meet other exchange students from different faculties. There are different activities for students over a span of four days and you can choose the events you wish to attend. It is a great opportunity to mingle with other exchange students.

February: Throughout February I had multiple assignments to submit. I was constrained from travelling outside Netherlands that month due to unfavorable weather conditions. It was extremely windy and cold in the Netherlands. I took the time to get to know my exchange friends and we formed a group for our travel plans for the next trimester. For one of my classes I visited the flower auction market. The flower market is the Netherlands is famous throughout the world. It was extremely fascinating to understanding the trading practices followed in the flower auction market.

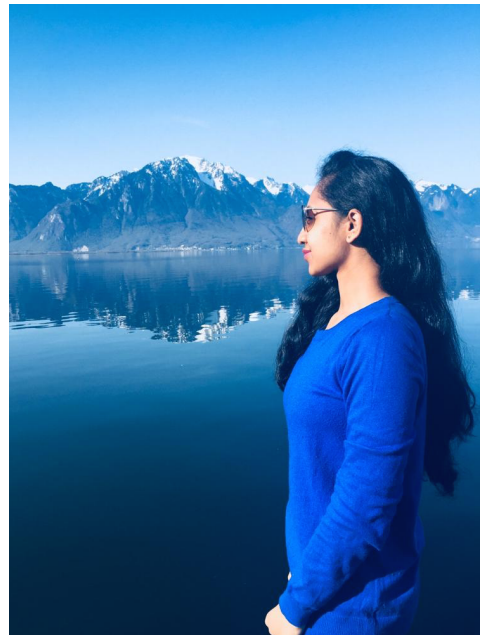


March: This month marked the end of the first trimester. I spent a most of my time studying for my finals. I had three exams at the end of trimester one. I also had two weeks of spring break before the second semester started. During that period, I travelled to Vienna, Salzburg, Budapest and Prague. I had a mini reunion with my friends in Vienna whom I met during a



summer exchange in the University of Texas at Austin. It was a great feeling to reconnect with my old buddies. I sampled the local delicacies in each of the places. Spring break is a great time to travel as the weather is pleasant in most parts of Europe.

April: The second trimester begins in April. I added two business courses because I could not get into the courses in other schools due to limited seats. I found a travel group that organizes trips for students during long weekends and other holidays. I decided to travel to Basel, Bern and Zermatt in Switzerland with this travel group along with another friend. It is great way to meet students from other exchange student from different universities in Europe. However, I also felt that I did not get enough time to explore each place due to the tight schedule. I would recommend travelling with groups for short trips only.



May: The weather in May is ideal for travelling. I had three trips in May. I travelled to Berlin with a huge group of students. The trip was organized by the Erasmus International Student Association. I also visited my friend in London during a long weekend. When I was in Rotterdam, I was busy attending classes and completing assignments before each trip. In the last week of May, I travelled with my family to Paris, Brussels, Bruges, Gent and Amsterdam. It was a perfect end to the exchange program.



June: As the exams were fast approaching, I devoted my days to study for the finals. I had three back to back exams and I was flying out to Hong Kong as soon as exams finished in the mid of June to start my internship program. I closed my ING bank account, returned my sports pass and collected the deposit for the pass.

General Exchange Information

Visa Procedures: You should apply for the visa as soon as you receive the email from the program coordinator. You need to apply for the MVV visa. You will be first granted a visa for three months and you collect your residence permit which is valid for 9 months in Rotterdam. The immigration office in Rotterdam is within walking distance from the Centraal Station. The whole procedure takes about five minutes. You can book an appointment or opt for walk-in.

Orientation Activities: The orientation activities are held for a whole day. You need to pay 65 euros and you are provided a link in advance through which you can make the payment either before or after the orientation. We started the day with an information session in which an overview of the procedures followed in Erasmus University Rotterdam. They will go over the different platforms used in RSM such as the Blackboard, Osiris and MyEUR platform. We were then put into groups of ten and played a game where we had to go specific spots on the campus answer questions about RSM. My team was one among the winning teams and we received a trophy at the end of the orientation dinner. The orientation dinner was organized on a cruise and we sailed over different ports close to Rotterdam. We got try traditional Dutch food and learnt a few common Dutch phrases. Similar to Hong Kong, RSM also has a buddy system. The buddy will contact you a couple weeks before the orientation and answer any of your queries. The Buddy will be with your team throughout the orientation day and help you out with the activities.

International Services & Activities: The University organizes an event called One Stop Shop where students can complete mandatory tasks such as registering at the City Hall, purchase insurance, open a bank account and register for welcome events.

Accommodations: The Program coordinator will send the students an email a few months before the exchange starts to with the relevant information about housing. If the student opts to live on campus, the student can avail all the campus facilities with ease and attend classes on time, however if the student opts to stay off campus then the student will be able to enjoy the food and other happening areas in the downtown. I lived on campus in a building called Hatta. If the student wants to live on campus he or she has to make sure that they book the room as soon as the link is active which would be mentioned earlier by the Housing Board SSH.

Course Registration: The first week of each trimester is the Add and Drop period. A few months before the exchange program begins the student has to choose courses from a list provided by the exchange coordinator. Depending on the availability of seats the courses will be confirmed. In case the student could not enroll into the courses that he or she opted for the student can add another course during the Add and Drop period. The student is allowed to study courses from another school in the university. For each trimester that student can enroll only in a limited number of courses in other schools. It is essential to keep in mind that in other schools the duration of each term is different compared to RSM and each school has its own Add and Drop period. Some of the courses are very popular among exchange students and I would advise to pick the courses as soon as possible.

Teaching & Assessment Methods: The Rotterdam School of Management follows a research based learning approach. Before every class the student is expected to read several critical essays and other material to better understand the concepts. We spend less time attending classes in RSM compared to HKUST. Students spend more time on self-study. The assessment methods are quite stringent and it is normal for majority of the class to fail a subject. The students have an option of taking a resit exam if they fail a course. The resit exam are held at the end of both the trimesters in July. If you plan to attend the resit exams make sure you adjust your travel plans accordingly.

Sports and Recreation Facilities: The University has excellent sports facilities. The student can opt for the six month pass which includes the gym, sports classes and other facilities. There are a wide variety of sport classes such as Zumba, Steps, Yoga, Boxing and many more. The student can also get personalized training from instructors. Students can enroll themselves in sport classes for different levels. Erasmus University also has a very active dancing society which organizes fun events from regularly. At the beginning of each trimester students can enroll themselves in different dance form classes. There is a plethora of exercise options for students in the university.

Finance & Banking (including currency / expenses): I opened a bank account in ING. I preferred ING over another bank called Bunq which was recommended by the university. I visited the bank which was 10 minutes away from campus. The student needs to show his or her passport, exchange confirmation letter from Erasmus University Rotterdam and another id such as the Hong Kong ID Card. When closing the bank account remember to leave 10 euros for bank charges. You can use the ING debit card throughout Europe. I carried limited

cash when I was travelling and made most of my payments using the debit card. I would recommend carrying some cash if the student is travelling to countries that have their own currency other than the euro as some places do not accept any cards.

Social Clubs & Networking Opportunities: There are different kinds of societies and clubs. These clubs keep organizing different kind of events and the students can choose which ones to attend. The International Student Society also organizes social drinks every month where students from all departments can meet and interact.



Health & Safety: Students can purchase insurance either at one stop shop organized in the beginning of January or before entering Rotterdam. The university provided insurance details in the welcome pack.

Food: There are a few canteens on campus where you can find different cuisines. I personally felt that the choices were very limited. Most students prefer to cook their own food. I would recommend students to carry their own spices while coming to Rotterdam. You can find most of the spices in the Asian Supermarket or in Markthaal. There is one supermarket called Spar on campus and another supermarket called Plus de esch located within walking distance from the campus. For small purchases I would suggest Spar otherwise it is better to go to Plus de esch.

Transportation: In the Netherlands you can use the OV card to travel on different modes of transport such as the tram, metro and intercity trains. The OV card is very similar to an

octopus card, one can recharge the card depending on the usage in any train station. You can buy the OV card at any train station or you can also borrow an OV card from the ESN Office and return the card when you leave Rotterdam. The student is required to provide a minor amount as deposit when renting the card in the ESN Office. I found it convenient to take an Uber when travelling in groups. There are separate biking lanes present throughout Rotterdam. After midnight the public transport shuts and students generally bike home after attending late night parties.

Climate: It is mostly cold in Rotterdam and you will need to have your jacket with you at all times. It is also advisable to carry an umbrella with you as it rains very often. I would advise wearing layered clothing as in indoor areas there is heating in most places.

Communication: During the orientation students can pick up free Lebara sim cards from the ESN office. I used Lebara throughout my exchange. Some of friends preferred to other options such as Vodafone and T-Mobile for better data plans. The Lebara sim card works throughout Europe and the student can top up at his or her convenience.

Cautionary measures: I feel Rotterdam is a relatively safe place compared to other parts of Europe. It is advisable to carry locks for your suitcase when leaving your belongings in shared accommodations such as student hostels. There were several instances where my friend's luggage got stolen which included passport, residence permit, cash and credit cards. I would recommend storing your belongings in different bags so that in case one bag is stolen you still have your other stuff.

Items to Bring

- Passport
- Visa
- Birth Certificate
- Cash (for first 2 weeks before opening your bank account)
- Raincoat
- Winter Clothes
- Umbrella
- Adaptors
- Bedsheets & Pillow Covers
- Laundry Bag

- Cutlery
- Hangers
- Stationery

Useful Links and Contacts

- **Bachelor & Master Exchange (incoming)**

Ms. Ellen Vermeulen, Program Manager Bachelor & Master Exchange (incoming), vermeulen@rsm.nl

- **Exchange Programs Assistance**

Ms Sherida Wong, Senior Program Assistant Exchange Programs, wong@rsm.nl

