

Exchange Report

One of the reason that I applied to my program, Business Administration and Political Science was because of the mandatory exchange studies that they have. I have always wanted to try the student life outside of Sweden and since I am interested in both subjects, it was a perfect match for me.

My first choice was Amsterdam, and one of the reason for it was because of the vibe of the city, I heard a lot of good things about it and all of them a very true. It is a very easy-going and laid back city, I would say and most citizens speak very good English which makes life so much easier when asking for help or just buying groceries. I arrived when Amsterdam had a heatwave, and it was perfect to take the bike and go to the beach or have a picnic in one of the many parks that Amsterdam has.

Speaking of bikes, yes, everyone uses a bike here, and more so during the summer. It is the cheapest way of getting around the city (metro is around 90€/month), but be careful where you get your bike, many of them are in a bad condition and sometimes you end up spending much more than budgeted. There is one known market in Waterlooplein, where you can find bikes. But make sure to really try it out and do not be afraid of lowering the price, if you are lucky you can get a decent bike for around 70€. Another option is to rent the bike, which I did and it was very good. I paid 75€ for three month with insurance, meaning that, if I have my key I can get a new bike if it gets stolen. The place is called Rent a Bike and it is in Damstraat.

If you go here, make sure to set up a Maestro bank account, in the Netherlands is it very difficult to pay with Visa or MasterCard, especially at the food stores. I would suggest you to get this card from your own bank in Sweden. They do offer to help you open a bank account here with ING bank, but it does take longer and the prices a pretty much the same as if you would have opened an account with your own bank in Sweden.

To get a Dutch number I would suggest you to go to Vodafone and buy a prepaid card, it is very quick and the connection is good.

After arrival day, we were divided into different groups and had different activities during a week to get to know the city as well as to get to know other student, like the Swedish welcoming program, Fadderiet.

The housing situation was a bad experience for me and for most students in my complex. There are two main companies for student housing in Amsterdam, DUWO and DeKey. I got my room in Daalwijk through DUWO which is located circa 6 min from school, which is very convenient. But the cons a more than the pros, the building is old and not well maintained. There were problems with the elevator, drain, heating, silverfish and mice. If you can, try to get a room through DeKey, in Frajlemaborg which is a building attached to the school. There are definitely more parties in that building, but not to the point where you cannot sleep.

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The quality of the school is very poor in comparison to Stockholm University. I took the minor Business and Process integration with focus on management, the five courses I took were all based on working with the program SAP, which if you are not familiar with can be rather difficult.

Most of the courses were very unorganized, no course guide was given, nor a grading criteria, which we are used to at Stockholm University, that made it difficult to keep track on your own performance and what you needed to do to achieve a higher grade. Moreover, the feedback was very poor among all the teachers. To continue, it was almost impossible to get hold of teachers through mail, and many of the times they were not available at their offices.

Overall, I had a really good semester in Amsterdam and I am glad that I went there. Even though I am not that satisfied with the school and housing I would definitely recommend to go there, and travel around and enjoy everything that the country has to offer.