

Erfahrungsbericht über einen Auslandsaufenthalt im Rahmen eines Austauschprogramms (Studium)

Gastland: Niederlande

Gastinstitution: Universiteit Twente

1. Für welches Austausch- oder Förderprogramm fertigen Sie diesen

Erfahrungsbericht an?

Erasmus (Europa oder Übersee)

2. Vorbereitung (Planung, Organisation und Bewerbung bei der Gasteinrichtung)

As a Bachelor's Wirtschaftsinformatik (Information Systems) student, searching for the right modules was a little rough. The UT does not provide as many modules as the FAU due to their teaching system. Therefore, I had to find courses at the UT that represented FAU modules I still needed to pass. This wasn't very easy in my experience, so I recommend taking some weeks to check if there are equivalent modules, if you need to search for equivalent modules.

Otherwise, planning and applying was very easy and was handled via the Mobility Online platform. When accepted, the exchange coordinator of the UT reaches out to you, handles the course registration, and helps you with any question you might have. This made the rest of the preparation very manageable and pleasant.

3. An- und Einreise (Visum, Flug/Bahn/Bus)

Arriving by train is possible and does not take too long from the Nürnberg central station. I recommend => Hannover => Hengelo => Enschede. I did not experience any border control.

If needed, the students organize a pick-up service at the beginning of each semester, where local students pick you up from your place of arrival and help you get to your residence.

4. Unterkunft (Wohnheim/Privat)

Housing in the Netherlands is a big problem, and even though it's better in Twente, I recommend starting to search for housing as soon as possible to save yourself some nerves. You will find many students still haven't found housing shortly before or during the first week.

I was lucky to rent a 12m² studio for 650€/month, which I found 3 months in advance via Kamernet. I recommend searching on similar housing platforms, but you need to pay a 40€/month subscription to be able to contact the landlord/owner.

Free options include Roomspot, however the tenant is rolled and there's usually 100-200 applicants, so it's a gamble. And if it's shared living, chances are, you won't get accepted, especially if it's a Dutch speaking shared living/WG. This also applies to other platforms. However, it doesn't hurt to still log into Roomspot every day to increase your chances of finding housing.

Non-EEA students usually receive a guaranteed housing offer in the ITC hotel or on campus. I don't know anyone this happened to, but if you don't manage to find housing until the very end, you can contact the UT as an EEA student, and they will likely help with providing you with a room.

After arrival, you need to register with the municipality. The city usually organizes bulk registration days for the first week of studies and the UT will remind you to make an appointment. You will receive your BSN number and if you are an EEA student, you can deregister online at the end of your stay.

5. Fachlicher Aufenthalt an der Gasteinrichtung (Lehrveranstaltungen, Praktikumsinhalte und -aufgaben, Sprachkurse, Stundenplan, Prüfungen, Abschlussarbeit)

UT's teaching program is different from the German experience. Every semester is divided into two quartiles, every quartile you take one module consisting of different courses (lectures, exercise and practice, and statistics for example). The exams, final presentations, and submissions are scheduled towards the end of the semester, which means you don't have to memorize as much.

However, you have a little bit more workload throughout the quartile, with frequent submissions, reports, presentations etc.

I liked this teaching style, but since 1 quartile = 1 UT module (15 ECTS) = 1 FAU module (5 ECTS), I was only able to get 10 ECTS in 6 months, which is the minimum for the Erasmus+ funding.

The modules are very practice-oriented and throughout both quartiles I worked together with a team of students and a stakeholder of a real company or startup to think of a solution to their problem. In comparison to the FAU, the modules are not hard to pass and you can get good grades, if you put in the effort.

The schedule depends on the module. You usually have a lot of time to work by yourself or focus on other things. The schedule can even differ from week to week.

The UT provides priced Dutch and English language courses. Dutch language courses are not needed, since every module is held entirely in English and most students are international.

6. Betreuung an der Gasteinrichtung (International Office, Fachbereich, Praktikumsbetreuung)

You will get in touch with the exchange coordinator responsible very early on. In my experience, they are very nice and helpful, were always there to answer any question we might've had. In case the coordinator is away, you will get notified about this in advance and receive a substitute contact.

I experienced no issues regarding this.

7. Ausstattung der Gasteinrichtung (Bibliothek, Computerräume, Laboratorien, Unterrichts- und Arbeitsräume etc.)

The equipment is quite impressive, especially for technical/engineering/biomedical students. There is a library on campus, it's not too big. The buildings on campus are beautiful, and you will always find somewhere to study or work on your assignment on. Especially the Langezijds is loved by students. The campus has a Spar grocery store, restaurants, a bike repair shop and a lot of sports and culture equipment.

8. Alltag und Freizeit (Sehenswertes, Kulinarisches, Geld abheben, Handy, Jobs)

The UT offers many extracurricular activities and sports and culture associations you can join. Associations and the ESN also organize regular events and parties, also trips, like stays at local bungalows in a forest or Prague and Paris.

There are many nice parks, like the Volkspark or Lederboerpark, where students like to hang out. The city center offers student cafés like the Douwe Egberts, a public library, shops, restaurants, bars, and clubs! Favorite places include the Bluff Food Bar, Old Irish Pub, the Silent Disco, and the Proeflokaal. Everything is located around the main square, which is the Oude Kerk.

Twice a week, there's a busy market with Dutch street food like Loempia, Kibbeling, and Poffertjes, but also produce and clothes on Hendrik Jan van Heekplein. You will also find art and history museums. In the north you will find a monument that reminds of the firework catastrophe in 2000.

Restaurants in the east of the Netherlands are a little different to Germany, you won't easily find good sushi, burgers or Italian food to sit inside for an affordable price. Going out you will pay higher prices for food and drinks.

Overall, Enschede doesn't offer a lot of sightseeing, but it is a lively student city. German regional trains run directly from the Enschede central station, so with a Deutschlandticket you can visit Münster. Almost all Dutch cities are 2-3h away from Enschede, so you can always do daytrips and explore the country. The Dutch railway system NS offers subscriptions for 40% off or Weekends free.

Of course, bicycles play a big part in the Dutch student life, and it was my and my friends' main mode of transport. There are secondhand bicycle markets, where you can purchase a bike for 100-200€, organized by the UT during the Kick In and the city. To not have to sell it again, I chose the subscriptions service Swapfiets, which I can recommend for exchange students.

If you want to, you can find a job at a supermarket or as a service staff at a restaurant.

9. Finanzielles (Lebenshaltungskosten, Stipendien, finanzielle Unterstützung der Gaststeinrichtung)

The Netherlands are expensive! Housing, transportation, food, and especially drugstore and household items.

There are bulk discounts at Kruidvat, you can go shopping at Action or die Grenze, or cross the border and shop at the DM in Gronau. But if you suddenly run out of something, be prepared to pay 2-3x the amount that you would pay in Germany.

You might be eligible to receive the housing benefit "huurtoeslag".

The basic Erasmus+ scholarship did not cover rent for me. I was reliant on savings and a supportive family.

10. Fazit (beste und schlechteste Erfahrung)

I really enjoyed my stay, and I am grateful for the scholarship and that I had the chance to experience the exchange. The university is great, I made many unforgettable memories and was able to grow from it. Even though it's not far from home, the Netherlands surprised me in many ways and I experienced a different way of life.

My favorite memory was the Kick In, which I advise you to join! It's a week of events and parties organized by students. You get food, it is fun, and you are likely to meet the people you will spend the rest of your exchange with. Students who did not participate often report having had issues with finding friends in the beginning.

Partying and drinking play a big role, but you are never forced to drink and you can come and go whenever you want. Even people who don't like to party enjoyed the Kick In.

The downside of the exchange was the weather. Bring warmer clothes than you think you will need. It also rains a lot, so I recommend waterproof clothes, especially when riding the bike.

11. Wichtige Ansprechpartner und Links

Admission and application questions: studentservices@utwente.nl

Exchange coordinator for the BMS faculty: l.a.sander@utwente.nl

(As a WiSo student I was automatically put into the BMs (Business, Management, Social sciences) faculty and had to choose modules from International Business Administration (IBA).)

Links:

<https://www.utwente.nl/en/education/electives/exchange/practical-information/>

<https://www.utwente.nl/en/education/electives/exchange/courses/courses-how-to-apply/>

<https://www.utwente.nl/en/education/electives/exchange/>

BMS/IBA modules: <https://www.utwente.nl/en/education/electives/exchange/courses/business-administration/>

Housing info: <https://www.utwente.nl/en/campus/housing/students/>

Kick In registration: <https://www.kick-in.nl/en/>

Student associations: <https://su.utwente.nl/en/get-involved/Associations/>

12. Nur Erasmus-Aufenthalte: Für diejenigen Studierenden, die eine Sonderförderung erhalten haben: Bitte stellen Sie kurz dar, wie Sie Ihren Aufenthalt in dieser Hinsicht erlebt haben.