



Faculty of Law, University of Amsterdam (The Netherlands)

Study Guide

1 Overall impression

Amsterdam is a great city to study and live in, I had an amazing time.

2 Making preparations

(e.g. administrative matters, finding information)

Get your housing sorted as early as possible (see 5. below). The university sends out informative emails after you have been admitted; just follow these steps.

For any information regarding your specific master course you find information on the respective master course website. But there are also introduction days the week before university starts. You receive all necessary information about your course during these days and are also able to meet fellow students.

For most courses you need prior knowledge in international law. If you haven't taken this course in your Bachelor's, you will be required to do a deficiency exam in the first few weeks (self-study).

3 Contacts/Responsibilities

(e.g. important contact persons at the Partner University and Faculty)

There's a Digital Student Desk which is responsible for all kind of matters - it is super convenient and they are very responsive. At the faculty, you find help at the Education Desk. The course coordinator is responsible for course-related questions and there will be a student representative (student from your course, elected at the start of the academic year).

4 Housing

Sign up for housing immediately after receiving the email from the University of Amsterdam. You're asked to pay a fee of around 350 Euros but it's worth it and you get it back in case you don't get a housing offer via the university. Looking for accommodation on your own can be very challenging. If you'd like to live with friends you could also apply for one-semester accommodation and find a flat with your (new) friends for the second semester.

If you live in a studio flat, you can apply for a rent allowance (Huurtoeslag). It's all done in Dutch but the process is actually quite simple! You find more information on <https://www.belastingdienst.nl/wps/wcm/connect/bldcontentnl/belastingdienst/privetoelagen/huurtoeslag/>.

5 Arrival

There is an arrival day mid August on which you can collect your flat keys, register with the municipality, get your student ID and get all kind of information. The semester only starts in September however, so you can also arrive later and get everything sorted then.

6 Telephone

My Swiss phone subscription includes calls & data in the EU so I didn't need to change anything.

7 Bank account

A lot of places in the Netherlands do not accept credit cards (and sometimes also no cash) so you will need a debit card (Maestro, V Pay etc.).

As for Dutch banks, Bunq is super convenient - everything can be done quickly and online but there is a monthly fee. As for other banks like ING or ABN, I recommend making an appointment already before you leave Switzerland as the waiting times at the start of the academic year are quite long.

8 Transport

From/to Switzerland: I used car, train and plane. Both flights and train are usually quite cheap and airport/train station are easy to reach in Amsterdam. Flixbus is another option, especially if you have a lot of luggage.

To the University: Get a bike! You can buy one or rent one, e.g. at Swapfiets or Cheapass Bikes). Get an OV-chipkaart for public transport. If you want to use it for train trips around the Netherlands, you can make a monthly subscription for around 5 euros with discounts on weekends and on certain times during the day.

9 General information about the Partner Faculty and student life

Most courses are taught at the Roeterseiland campus which is a modern building with many study places. There are only a few classes per week so you only need to be there for 2,3 days a week. There are many other libraries or study places all over the city (Science park, Single library, De Hallen co-working space).

Student life in Amsterdam is great! You'll meet people from all over the world and the courses often contain group assignments so it's super easy to meet fellow students. The USC offers a big variety of sports and the gyms are really nice as well (some have a sauna/steam bath).

10 Teaching and studying at the Partner Faculty

(e.g. program structure, methodology, exams, etc.)

The program structure is very different from UZH and not as well organised so expect delays in study results, late changes of exam dates etc. The academic year is taught in blocks, each block consists of 7

weeks, followed by exams in week 8. You usually follow two to three courses at the same time. In the first semester, we had exams in October and December and in January we had a month off. In the second semester, there were another two blocks from February to May, each followed by exams. You receive all information and materials for the courses via the platform Canvas. The courses are self-study based and the assigned readings are often around 100 pages or more per week. Exams are all online, sometimes in person, sometimes take-home. There are also courses where you have to write an essay instead of taking an exam. I highly recommend applying for a moot court or one of the law clinics to get the most out of your Master's.

11 City

(e.g. cultural activities, sports, discounts, nightlife, must-sees, short trips, etc.)

Amsterdam has a lot to offer. It's small enough to get everywhere by bike but big enough to never get bored. Each neighbourhood has its own charme, there are so many nice parks, restaurants, bars and shops. If you like museums, get a museumkaart for free entrance to all museums (Foam, Stedelijk, Rijksmuseum etc.). In summer, there are a lot of places to go swimming (outer canals, Sloterpas, Amsterdam Noord etc.) or you can do a day trip bike tour to Zandervoort or Bloemendaal. The Hague is also worth a visit, and maybe you get the chance to visit some international institutions (ICJ, ICC etc.).

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