



Faculty of Law, University of Amsterdam (The Netherlands)

Study Guide

1 Overall impression

I had a great time in Amsterdam and would do it again anytime.

2 Making preparations

(e.g. administrative matters, finding information)

You can find all the necessary information on the UvA-Webpage. If you need more information, don't hesitate to contact them. They normally reply within a few days and provide you with the relevant information.

In the week before university starts the faculty organizes introduction days where you get all the necessary information and already meet your future fellow students

3 Contacts/Responsibilities

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

There are the Digital Student Desk online and the Education Desk on campus where you can ask all your questions. If you have questions related to your masters you can directly ask the lecturers or the course coordinator. Everyone at UvA is very responsive and happy to help you.

4 Housing

Finding a place to stay in Amsterdam is quite hard. I would suggest using Facebook as a platform to get in touch with possible flatmates. If you have any contacts to Amsterdam, make use of them and ask if they know someone who knows someone...

You will receive information via email from UvA concerning student housing. You can try to get a room this way but keep in mind that while some rooms are really nice and modern others are not.

5 Arrival

After you arrive in Amsterdam you need to register at the municipality. After your registration you'll receive a Dutch citizen service number (BSN). You will need this number in different situations (Covid-Test etc).

I would recommend to arrive a few days before the semester starts so that you can sort out things such as get a bike, arrange your room, get to know the city.

6 Telephone

(e.g. costs, carriers)

My Swiss phone contract includes calls and data in the EU so I did not get a Dutch phone number.

7 Bank account

Many places in the Netherlands don't accept credit cards (Visa, Mastercard etc) or cash.

I did a Revolut account where I could easily change from Swiss francs to euros. The problem was, that since I registered with my Swiss address, they gave me a Mastercard. If you consider using Revolut make sure you use your Dutch address since changing your address from Switzerland to another country is not possible at the moment. With a Dutch address you would also get the opportunity to chose a Maestro card.

8 Transport

From/to Switzerland: I always traveled with the train. If you want to travel often between Zurich and Amsterdam you could consider getting a Deutsche Bahn BahnCard 25 or 50. If you do so keep in mind that you need to terminate the contract 6 weeks before the new contract starts (you will not get any notification that this is happening).

The airport in Amsterdam is absolut chaos right.

To the University: I recommend to get a bike as fast as possible. I always used my bike when going from one place to the other. There is the option of getting a Swapfiets (you rent your bike) but I would recommend getting your own bike. There are many bike shops in Amsterdam and you can also try Facebook Marketplace.

Sometimes you'll have to use the public transport. For this situations I recommend getting an OV-chipkaart. It's a card that can be used in all public transport in the Netherlands and you just need to put money on it before you start your trip.

9 General information about the Partner Faculty and student life

Most of my classes were taught at Roeterseiland campus. It's a modern building and has many places to study. Compared to the UZH there is not much choice when it comes to the canteen. At Roeterseiland there is one canteen where you can get food from different extern providers. It is rather expensive. If you want to save money I recommend meal prepping or Albert Heijn which is located next to the University.

The student life in Amsterdam is great. You get to meet many people from around the world and they are all interested in new friendships since they are like you new to the city.

10 Teaching and studying at the Partner Faculty

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

Teaching, studying and exams are quite different from UZH. The two semesters are divided into three blocks. The first two blocks have 7 weeks of lectures and then in the last week (week 8) you have exams.

There is no break between the last lecture and the exam week and there is also no break between exams and the beginning of the new block.

Normally you have 2 hours of class and 2 hours of working groups for each course per week. The working groups are supposed to be interactive and you are expected to prepare the reading material. You'll get many readings and I recommend to try to keep up to date with it, since you don't have much time before the exams to read them all.

All my exams were written on the computer. In some courses we had to write a paper or an essay.

You have the opportunity to apply for a law clinic. This is an experience that I highly recommend. If you do the law clinic in the first semester, you'll have more time for your thesis in the second semester. If you do the law clinic in the second semester you'll have a wider range of clinics to choose from.

I recommend to think about a possible thesis topic early on. You'll have to hand in your research proposal in December which is a period where you have many other deadlines as well. Thinking of an interesting topic in advance will take away some stress from you.

The UvA is not as well organized as UZH. You might receive your study results delayed and there might be late changes of exam dates and form of the exams.

11 City

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

Amsterdam is a great city to live in. The winters are long, dark and hard. But once you survived this spring will reward you. You can bike everywhere and I highly recommend discovering the different neighborhoods. If you like going to museums, consider getting a museumskaart.

Outside of Amsterdam I recommend going to Zandvoort, Harlem and The Hague.

We spend some days in a tiny house at the beach in Katwijk aan Zee. This is an experience that I highly recommend.

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