



# Faculty of Law, University of Amsterdam (The Netherlands)

## Study Guide

### 1 Overall impression

My LL.M. experience was challenging and enriching. Amsterdam is a beautiful city to experience as a student, I can highly recommend choosing UvA as a partner university.

### 2 Making preparations

(e.g. administrative matters, finding information)

In the Netherlands, most administrative matters require a BSN (citizen service number). You receive your own BSN when you register in the Netherlands and you'll need it to set up your Dutch bank account, mobile number etc. In order to register, you need to make a prior appointment with the municipality that you are moving to. There are a couple of municipality offices in Amsterdam. However, because many international students move to Amsterdam at the same time, they are booked up weeks in advance in September. The municipality has a phone number you can call from abroad that you can find on their website. It is worth calling already some time ahead to your moving date to make an appointment in early September. That way you can swiftly set up all your administrative matters after arriving.

One small note on health care: If you are a EU/EFTA student, you may keep your Swiss health care while studying in Amsterdam. However, if you want to work in the Netherlands, you have to get Dutch health insurance.

### 3 Contacts/Responsibilities

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

The LL.M. programmes at UvA have individual programme coordinators that function as contact points for student inquiries and can help with specific programme related questions. Furthermore, the Faculty has an education desk that informs student on overall study and enrolment related matters. The professors are usually also very approachable and happy to help.

### 4 Housing

The housing situation in Amsterdam is very tough and finding a place to stay will probably be your biggest administrative hurdle. I would definitely have it figured out before you arrive and not count on finding something once you're already in Amsterdam. I would try to get in touch with UZH Double Degree students that are leaving Amsterdam when you arrive, maybe someone has a room that you could take over.

UvA offers some student housing that you can sign up for, you will be informed by the university about the deadlines once you are accepted to the programme. It is however not guaranteed that you have a spot - especially as an EU/EFTA student, because non-European students are treated preferentially for university housing.

If you search for housing elsewhere, you can expect to pay the same or more than you would for a room in Zurich. If you are searching for an entire apartment from abroad, a safe (but costly) option would be to hire an agent to find you a place. They deliver, however most agencies charge around one month's rent for their service.

## **5 Arrival**

The UvA Law Faculty offers introduction events to your programme the week before the semester starts. It's a good opportunity to already meet your fellow students.

## **6 Telephone**

(e.g. costs, carriers)

The most prominent EU network providers (Vodafone etc.) also operate in the Netherlands, you can easily compare offers online. If you are moving into your own apartment and need to also set up internet, gas and electricity (which is privatised), I would watch out for package-deals (e.g. from Budgethuis).

## **7 Bank account**

Setting up a Dutch bank account is fairly easy once you have your BSN. Different banks offer student packages, I personally chose ABN-AMRO. You could also opt for an international Euro account like N26 or Revolut instead of opening an account in the Netherlands.

## **8 Transport**

It goes without saying that you will need a bike in Amsterdam. It is by far the cheapest and fastest way to get around. You can either get a second-hand bike at a bikeshop ('Fietswinkel') or subscribe to the bike service 'Swapfiets'.

For very rainy days in Amsterdam and for train trips around the country, get an 'OV-chipkaart'. It's an individual travel pass for all public transportation and especially in Amsterdam, it's cheaper than buying single ride tram/bus tickets.

## **9 General information about the Partner Faculty and student life**

The Roeterseiland Campus (where the UvA Law Faculty is) is modern and right by the canals. It is very geared towards student life and surrounded by cafes and bars. The Law Library has a beautiful view of Amsterdam. For food, the cafeteria offers quite a variety of options, plus there are also supermarkets nearby. There is a big underground bike parking facility at the Campus, so you don't have to worry about your bike during class.

## **10 Teaching and studying at the Partner Faculty**

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

I did the LL.M. programme in international and transnational criminal law, which was amazing but very demanding. The semester is structured in 8-week blocks - 7 weeks of lectures and seminars, followed by 1 week of exams. Hence, it is quite a different study pace from what UZH students are used to. Depending on the size of your programme, the interaction with the lecturers will be very personal. You can expect to address everyone by their first name and also expect the lecturers to learn the students' names by heart. In our programme, the teaching style was more in line with what you would expect from an American university and very distinct from the rather impersonal approach at UZH. I would highly suggest to apply for a selective LL.M. at UvA (you can see on the university website which ones are). The student cohort tends to be more engaged and interested that way and you can expect to really be challenged and learn a lot.

## **11 City**

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

Amsterdam obviously has plenty to offer with regards to sight-seeing. It is a peaceful and liveable city and its residents are very approachable and open. If you are used to Zurich's seriousness, you will be pleasantly surprised by the Dutch down to earth and easy-going attitude.

As to sports, I went to dance classes at Chassé. In case you are interested in dance, I can highly recommend the studio! It's in a beautiful old church in the Western part of the city.

As to discounts, one thing I found is that beauty products (shampoo etc.) are quite expensive in the Netherlands. It is worth checking out drugstores (like 'Etos' or 'Kruidvat'), they very often have 2 for 1 or similar discounts on popular brands.

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