



Faculty of Law, Maastricht University (The Netherlands)

Study Guide

1 Overall impression

My experience as a double degree student at Maastricht University was very positive and is one that I would recommend to any student wanting to experience a different method of learning and studying and interested in International and European Law.

2 Making preparations

(e.g. administrative matters, finding information)

The University of Maastricht provided very clear information about administrative matters via e-mails that we have received prior to coming to Maastricht.

3 Contacts/Responsibilities

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

I did not have a contact person at the Partner university. One usually can contact the University from a contact form and the responsible person will answer. All in all, because it is a normal LLM programme, Double Degree students from Zürich are not differentiated from other LLM students studying at UM.

4 Housing

I found accommodation through a friend who was studying in Maastricht already. Overall, the housing situation in Maastricht is very difficult, and I would advise anyone who knows that they will be moving to Maastricht to start looking in May / June already and try to contact existing Double Degree students there (which happened for example for me as I passed on my room to a UZH student going to Maastricht the year after me). Many people find themselves having to live in neighbouring towns / cities and commuting to Maastricht for classes, which is unfortunate as it takes away from the experience of living on a city-campus.

5 Arrival

I arrived the week-end prior to the start of class (which began end of August), however there is also possibility to come earlier for the so-called "INKOM" which is like an introduction week to the university, which took place online that year. I could not attend because I was working during the summer, but I believe - especially when there is no Corona restrictions - that such a week could be a great introduction to the student life in Maastricht and a way to make new friends.

6 Telephone

(e.g. costs, carriers)

I have a pre-paid SIM card in Switzerland and did not change anything when going to Maastricht.

7 Bank account

I did not make a new bank account in the Netherlands. I did, however, get Revolut which allowed me to have a Maestro card with which I could pay. In Maastricht, a lot of places do not take VISA or Mastercard, so one needs to either have a Maestro or cash.

8 Transport

I travelled by train from Switzerland to Maastricht.

9 General information about the Partner Faculty and student life

Maastricht University is very diverse in its student body, which makes the experience very rich and interesting. Most students in the programme have a legal background in their own national jurisdictions, but also some have studied something else at bachelor level or some others having already practiced as lawyers or other legal experts for some time. Student life in Maastricht is generally very rich, as the city is small and it is always possible to hang out with friends and fellow students - mostly for lunch / coffee breaks / evening as everyone is also studying consistently throughout the entire year. I would therefore not say that there are periods in the student year which are busier than others (as it is towards the end of the semester at UZH, for example), because the system is structured in a way that one does not really have the time to relax or slack off. However, such a system also makes exam "season" less intense and less stressful.

10 Teaching and studying at the Partner Faculty

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

Maastricht University is known for its "PBL" aka Problem-Based Learning system, which consists in having lectures accompanied by tutorials which are working sessions in small groups (10-15 students) where students get to tackle cases / questions and dive into the topic of the week. The year is structure into "periods" of seven weeks. Usually students take 2 courses per period, meaning that they get to tackle 2 courses in detail for 6 weeks, the exam taking place on the 7th week. In this way, the programme is very dynamic - I really liked being able to tackle less subjects at the same time, and changing courses (and "moving on" more frequently, rather than having several big exams at the end of the semester. Moreover, there are resit opportunities which take place throughout the year (and apparently it is possible to resit the same exam more than once). In general, the exam mainly consists in what is has been discussed in tutorials and a student who has done their "honest work" will usually get a passing grade and higher. While UM is more intense than UZH in terms of the amount of studying required every week, I would say that the exams were never a surprise and were for the most part doable.

11 City

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

There are a lot of little cafes and restaurants in Maastricht where students can hang out, and coming from Switzerland, the prices are affordable for students. Sports associations are also very big in Maastricht and are a way to make great friends. I was in the swimming association, which allowed me to go to swimming practice up to 3 times per week. These associations are open to all levels, and Maastricht generally has a big variety of sports offers.

Night life is not very rich with only one real club in the city - Complex. However, the music there is quite nice for those who like electronic / techno. Moreover, there are plenty of "dancing bars" in the city where one can also go out.

On the culture side Maastricht has some museums - however they are not amazing and I would rather hop on a train to Brussels to explore the museum life there. Nonetheless, there are underground caves, which are a must-see in Maastricht (I would precisely recommend visiting the Zonnenberg cave), as well as the big forest going from the hill of Sint-Pietersberg where one can walk / run to get away from the city life. I also liked to go the Lumière Cinéma, which always had a nice selection of films and spent most of my days at the Brandweerkantine.

Date: July 2022