



Faculty of Law, University of Amsterdam (The Netherlands)

Study Guide

1 Overall impression

Very laid-back year, learning a lot but not nearly as much as you could in one year, in a very beautiful city! Go there for the city and the lifestyle, not primarily for the studies.

2 Making preparations

(e.g. administrative matters, finding information)

Find a place to stay!

3 Contacts/Responsibilities

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

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4 Housing

The housing market in Amsterdam is even tougher than in Zurich, so try to get into student housing. For this, you need to send your applications as early as possible, so that you will receive the link to register for student housing as soon as it is sent out. You need to register within minutes after the registration being sent out in order to get a room. If you don't get into student housing, try finding a room on the platform 'kamernet'. Rooms are usually published around 2 months in advance.

5 Arrival

The UvA offers pickup services mid-August, but semester only starts start of September.

6 Telephone

(e.g. costs, carriers)

T-Mobile offers decent plans (20 Euro for unlimited internet and calls), however be advised that most plans only cover internet in the EU and not also include Switzerland (even if the people working at the phone stores may tell you that). So you may need to buy additional data packages when you're back for visiting. In order to purchase a data plan, you need to have a Dutch bank account.

7 Bank account

Opening a bank account may take up to 4 weeks, as you need to book an appointment and at the start of the semester many banks are fully booked for a couple of weeks. The biggest Dutch banks are ABN AMRO and ING. The Netherlands do not use any credit cards but rather have their own payment system called iDeal, which you can only access if you have a Dutch bank account. iDeal may be the only payment method for many online shops, so not having it is a disadvantage.

8 Transport

Amsterdam Schiphol has cheap flights to Zurich and back for around 100 CHF round-trip. Schiphol Airport is approximately 20 min to the city center by train/metro. In the alternative, you can take the train (around 8h, change once in Frankfurt), which may be around the same price or slightly more expensive. Advantage: You can take as much luggage as you need. Disadvantage: Of total 5 train journeys I missed my connection in Frankfurt 3 times, once even being left there for the night.

9 General information about the Partner Faculty and student life

There is no real mensa and you will not have classes every day (only max. 3 days/week). The building is very beautiful and modern (search for Roeterseiland campus). All classes are taught in English, the tracks are mostly composed of international students (perhaps 5/80 being Dutch).

10 Teaching and studying at the Partner Faculty

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

The UvA offers much less lectures and focuses on self-study, so expect to have around 6-8h of lectures per week. You will follow 2-3 courses parallel for 7 weeks and will have exams on them in week 8; after this, new courses follow (again for 7 weeks and 1 exam week). So before christmas, you will have around 5 courses. In January, my track (Int. Trade and Investment Law) had no classes but rather this time was dedicated to the master's thesis, so most students spent most of January in their home countries. Then you have another two blocks (February-May) of lectures, and the final block (June-July) is dedicated exclusively to your thesis. You will need to do a lot of reading, expect 100 pages per week per class. Exams are on the computer, so no hand writing involved. Try to sign up for a law clinic or a moot court to get the most out of your year!

11 City

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

Amsterdam is truly beautiful, probably my favourite city in Europe. The canals at night are stunning and you can and will cycle wherever you go (noone uses public transport, even though it rains A LOT). Get a museumcard to get limitless access to all museums for a year. Leidseplein + Rembrandtplein have nice nightlife. For sports you can join the USC (fitness membership incl. group classes EUR 172/year), or you can simply go running in one of the parks or along the canals. Check out the Biertuin and Coco's Outback for international student night out.

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