

On my exchange semester abroad, I attended the University of Maastricht which is located in Maastricht, the southern part of The Netherlands. My semester started from September and ended December 2018. My major is business with a concentration in marketing and operations management. I had completed all my operations management courses at SFU therefore, the 3 courses I selected were in marketing. The courses I took were Marketing Strategy, Marketing Management, and Brand Management. Given, that I had never been to Europe this exchange was a very exciting and nervous experience for myself. I had never been away from my family for more than a week, so 4 months away seemed very intimidating.

During the exchange application process, I found that going to all the info nights and meeting students that had been to my exchange university really helped. I remember asking all the questions that I was wondering about to an exchange alumni and she had the answer to all of them. The info nights really helped calm my nerves and showed me the reality of what to expect on exchange. In addition, the SFU canvas exchange course also really covers a lot of the aspects that should be considered when planning exchange. For example, how to adapt to a new culture, meet new people, and plan a budget.

When researching what courses to take, I recommend seeing if the exchange university's semester lines up with the SFU semester because then when you come back you are able to start the new semester on time. Furthermore, check to see if you are eligible to take the course because some courses have prerequisites that you need to have. For me personally, I took courses that would count toward my business concentration and graduation. This allowed me to waste no time in completing my degree requirements and graduate on time.

When I started packing for my exchange, I actually took the wrong approach. For some reason, I thought I would need all my clothes and thus I packed my whole closet. However, I was completely wrong and had a lot of extra clothing that I never wore. I suggest researching the temperature in your exchange country and pack accordingly. Moreover, I'd advise to pack clothing that are comfortable, warm, and stuff that you would wear on a weekly basis.

When choosing a traveling options, I recommend searching all the nearest airports near your host university. A mistake I made was I chose Amsterdam airport because I assumed it was the closest one being 2 hours away and in the same country. However, after meeting some friends and asking them how they got there, I was told that Brussels airport was 1 hour away even though it was the neighboring country. It would have saved me time and money because flights were cheaper to this airport.

In terms of money, The Netherlands use Euros. The conversion is tough because 1600 euros is equivalent to 2500 dollars. When I arrived in Maastricht, I opened a bank account at ING bank



In the grand scheme of things, it was great because it keeps you in shape given all the different foods I was trying.

All in all, I think going on exchange was the best decision in life because it taught me so much about what is out there in the world outside of Vancouver. I learnt so much about myself because I was outside of my comfort zone and it allowed me to grow as a person and really develop my personality. Looking back on this experience a few years from now I can truly say that I will miss it because I met so many cool people. I'm glad to say after this exchange, I now have friends all over the world.

Photos Below









