

University of Amsterdam
Netherlands
College of Communication
Spring 2019 Semester

When preparing for my exchange it was valuable for me to have on hand the pre-exchange checklist. This provided me a basic outline of what I needed to bring as well as calls that I needed to make in order to tie up any loose ends. Aside from the checklist provided by SFU, I also researched online other lists of items that would be useful and details about leaving the country for an extended period of time that I otherwise did not know about. From there I created my own 'master' list in which I had organized materials to pack as well as appointments and calls that were necessary. This includes cancelling my phone plan, as well as changing my house address at my bank, school, memberships, work, etc.

When it came to packing, I chose to bring one large suitcase and a small one as I was planning on travelling after my exchange during the summer and I did not want to have an excessive amount of luggage to carry around. Because of this I used vacuum sealed bags to fit all of my items into my luggage. When it came to organizing transportation to and from the airport, I made plans weeks ahead as to who would drop me off and pick me up upon my arrival. When it came to researching courses I had some difficulty maneuvering the University of Amsterdam course portal, however, I managed to sign up for my courses on time and get into the classes that I chose.

My advice for those who are preparing for exchange would be to prepare and choose your classes ahead of time, making sure that you can enroll in them with the click of a button to avoid any further stress. In addition, I would recommend packing clothing for all weather, I unfortunately did not pack enough clothes for winter weather and upon my arrival it began to snow. My last recommendation for preparation would be to look into transferring funds from your Canadian account to a Dutch account. I did not look into the process well enough and was unable to transfer large amounts because my Canadian account was still attached to my old phone number. I would also recommend using [transferwise.com](https://www.transferwise.com) as it is the cheapest and easiest way to transfer money overseas. Transferring money is essential as most places in Holland only take cash or Dutch debit.

During Exchange

Arriving in Amsterdam and getting settled in was an easy process. UvA organized shuttles to pick up the students from the airport in order to take them to another building where you received information on opening a bank account, registering for the city, etc. After that, we were dropped off at our dorms where we were given the rest of the day to settle in. I lived in the de Key residence on Prinsengracht. I would highly recommend living there as it is the most central student dorm and the most fun as well as affordable. To put it lightly, Prinsengracht acts as a hub for most exchange students who live in other dorms. I had my own room with my own kitchen, only sharing a shower and toilet with one other person.

Other than that, I don't think there is anything else I wish someone had told me. I think that figuring it out yourself is all part of the experience and there's something really special about being unprepared and scared out of your wits but having a blast creating







