

In this report I will set out my experiences at the University of Surrey, starting with the application procedure and the introduction at the university. Included will be the content and experiences of the followed courses, the level of the courses and the their examination. Furthermore, I will set out more practical matters, varying from the quality of accommodations, payment, extra costs included for living in Guildford, contact with other exchange students, a general impression of my stay in England. I will conclude my report with tips for potential exchange students.

The application procedure for the University of Surrey started in September 2012. Students were required to send a motivation letter, as to why they should be accepted as a student at the University of Surrey, accompanied by a transcript of all their results at their home university. I experienced this procedure as a formal one; the international office at the University of Groningen already approved my application for the University of Surrey, so there were no reasons for the University of Surrey to disapprove my application. After I got admitted at the University of Surrey, I started receiving information from the University of Surrey, concerning the available courses, accommodation possibilities, and other general tips. I also received an invitation to participate in the 'buddy scheme'. This scheme provides new/Erasmus students with a 'normal' student to give you information and tips on your stay in England. I experienced the buddy scheme as extremely helpful. My buddy was always prepared to do find some background information for me, varying from information on the University itself, as well as information on living in Guildford. We decided to meet up every week, so that we could share our experiences and see our unanswered questions answered.

The University of Surrey arranged for incoming Erasmus students to be picked up at the airport (Heathrow only). Busses took us to our accommodation, which was very helpful in a strange country. The day after, on 1 February, there was an introduction day for all new students. We received a bag full of practical and helpful documents, as well as our timetable for the upcoming semester. There was a possibility to ask questions and to meet the other exchange students. At the end of the 'meet and greet', there was a guided tour around campus, as well as a lunch with the other students. In the evening, there were drinks for the new students at the campus pub. During this evening, I found out who the other exchange law students were.

Before my departure to England, I had to select my preferred courses. These preferred courses were not fixed immediately. If there were timetable clashes, students were allowed to edit their learning agreement, and choose other courses at the university after arrival. I chose to do Employment (discrimination) law, Evidence law, Environmental law in Action and Intellectual Property law. There were also language preparation courses, to help students with examinations and coursework. I decided to profit from these courses, which really helped during the examinations.

In general, the lectures were quite interesting and I can recommend them to all exchange students. It took some time getting used to the way of teaching in England, but eventually I got used to it and actually really liked it. The contact with teachers does not differ from the contact with teachers at the University of Groningen. Most lectures were mandatory to attend; I see this as a good thing, because this really prepared students for the exams. Every other week there was a tutorial for each course. For these tutorials, students were required to prepare a few questions,

concerning the subject-matter of a course in that week. I found these tutorials very helpful, because students were required to apply the acquired knowledge in practice. Apart from the preparation for the lectures and the tutorials, there were no other exams. All exams were scheduled for the end of the semester, which is kind of the same as at the University of Groningen. The level of the courses was quite high, but doable. With enough preparation and effort, every student, native or non-native English speakers, was able to end the courses successfully. The way in which courses were examined differs a lot from the way of examination at the University of Groningen. At the University of Surrey, students were required to choose 2 or 3 subjects of their interest per course, and they were examined on those subjects. So, students were not required to study all the subjects of a course, which is the custom at the University of Groningen. Examination was done by way of exam or by way of a paper.

Now, I will move on with my experiences of more practical matters. The accommodation quality was extremely high. Students are allowed to choose the size of their room, and if they require a separate bathroom. I have to remark that bigger rooms with a bathroom are more expensive than rooms without one. Students share their kitchen with other students; in my situation, I shared my kitchen with 6 other students. Students were allowed to pay their accommodation fees by way of direct debit. However, when this proves to be difficult, students were allowed to pay the accommodation fees monthly at the Cashiers Office, by pin or in cash.

There are not a lot of extra costs for staying in Guildford/England. It kind of depends on your way of living. If you want to travel a lot, this, obviously, is much more expensive than staying in all the time. For me, I chose to do a little travelling, I tried to find a medium and I think I succeeded.

As an Erasmus student, you have a lot of contact with the other Erasmus students. This is mainly because of the fact that you are all students in a strange country. I enjoyed this a lot, because I got to know a lot of other cultures, without even visiting their countries. I learned about their cultural habits, their language, their background and of course their food. However, Erasmus students are not limited to contact with other Erasmus students; the lectures and the student homes are mixed native and non-native English speakers. This way, Erasmus students also have contact with English students. The fact that I had the possibility to have contact with English and non-English students, was probably one of the best experiences of my stay at the University of Surrey.

My general impression and experience of my stay at the University of Surrey is extremely positive. I learned new things every day, and tried to make as much of my stay as possible. I learned to be more independent, more disciplined and I learned to enjoy and appreciate the things back home more than I used to. This exchange proved to be a life-changing experience, as I found out a lot about myself. I still keep in touch with the friends I made abroad, and I hope to keep in contact with them. I think every student should consider a stay abroad, because I can almost guarantee that it will be one of the most enjoyable and educative experiences of your life.

Finally, I wish to share some tips with potential exchange students. As I described before, your stay abroad will be great. Sometimes I kind of experienced it as a vacation. I never found myself in a boring situation, because there is always something to do. However, students must not forget that they actually have to study. A lot of students started studying for the exams approximately 2

weeks for the exams, which is, obviously, too late. Also make sure that your learning agreement is approved by your home- and receiving university. It is better to organize this before departure, because after your arrival you have a lot of other things to do.

Try to make contact with as much people and cultures as you can, because this might be your only chance to get to know so much cultures at the same time. Also, make sure to keep in touch with your family and friends back home, in order to avoid homesickness.

My last tip would be: enjoy your stay abroad!