

Final Report Study Erasmus - University of Guildford – School of Law

The focus in this report is on sharing my experiences with prospective students and giving my opinion on the study programme, the language and housing. Furthermore, I will randomly add general information. The University of Surrey is a university in the town of Guildford. Compared to the RUG that celebrated its 400th anniversary recently, this is a new or modern university that is on the rise. It is in the Guardian ranked number six of the UK (2014) and the university makes clear that they are proud of this achievement. I recommend this university to everyone who wants to study abroad for a semester.

Arrival

There was an airport pickup service arranged by the university for the people arriving at Heathrow Airport. While waiting for the buses, the first contact with other foreign students was made. I seemed to be the only one in the coach that was not tired after my flight. This was probably because my flight took 45 minutes, while most of the fellow students just arrived from Australia, Canada and The States. I arrived around noon at the university campus and we were brought to a reception where we received some information, brochures/maps and the keys of our flat. Some helpful local students led us to our places (I assume they got a compensation for this from the University). We had decided to go into town after the luggage drop and a quick peek around the halls (*people in the UK refer to living on campus when they say living "in halls"*). It was advised to order a bed-pack (pillow, duvet, etc.) prior to arrival. Some of us - well, actually, I was the only one - forgot to do is, and that is the right moment to meet Primark. I put my own bed-pack together for half the price, so you could see this as advice.

Introduction

The next day was the introduction day. We met in the morning, had to listen to some speeches and we received more general information. We had to do some meeting-games, to get to know more of the exchange people and we got a guided tour around campus. The important places for most of the exchange people are – Surrey Shop/Amigos: a little supermarket under the library to grab your drinks, food, etc. – Chancellors Bar: 'Channies' is a bar on campus and especially in the first weeks the main place to meet the others in the evening. – Hillside restaurant: the place where many people get their lunch. – Rubix Nightclub: the nightclub on campus. Usually open twice a week, often theme parties, sometimes performances and a capacity of around 1600 people. Other places like the Starbucks stores or Pizzaman don't need an explanation. Later on, we received our teaching schedule and all other information you expect on an information day.

Modules

As a European Law School student, I had to take three courses of 7,5 ECTS (*the University of Surrey calls their courses 'modules'*) to fulfil the 21 ECTS-requirement. I chose, prior to departure to the England: Business Law (MAN2108), International Human Rights (LAW3084) Law and Intellectual Property Law (LAW3072).

Business Law is a law module originally meant for Business students. You will probably not find the module on the list of available modules for the School of Law, but if you just email and ask if you are allowed to take this course, it should be fine. I advise to take this course. It starts with an

introduction to the English common law system before it goes into detail. The module is examined by a multiple choice exam halfway the semester and a case study exam at the end of the semester. I am sure that no one has difficulties with passing this module.

International Human Rights Law is a module that made me realise I am not interested in this part of the law. The module is examined by 3000-words coursework. You have approximately 1.5 month to complete this 'essay', i.e. plenty of time.

The Intellectual Property Law module is of a higher level than the abovementioned modules. It covers many subjects of intellectual property law (e.g. patents, trade marks, design law, copyright, etc.) and goes more into detail than most of the courses of the RUG too, probably due to the large amount of case law and EU decisions. The exam consists of six questions, essay and problem questions, and you have to pick two questions that you will answer thoroughly. At the beginning we (the Erasmus students) were a little bit dazed by the amount of cases we were expected to read in the first weeks. Halfway the semester we all had the opportunity to take a mock exam, so we knew what to expect and how to prepare for the 'real' exam. If you are not interested in intellectual property law, then this module is probably too comprehensive for you.

Teaching experience

The way of teaching differs from the Groningen or Dutch way. In general: most modules consist of eleven lectures and five or ten tutorials. Lectures are comparable to the *hoorcolleges* in Groningen, slightly more interactive, taking two hours. Tutorials are comparable to *werkcolleges* and taught to small groups, probably between five and fifteen persons, taking an hour. In Groningen the main focus is on general knowledge about subjects and solving problem questions. At Surrey, the focus was more on developing a personal opinion on law matters and expressing this in essays or answering essay questions.

Language

There is not a lot I need to say about the language. I think that the average Dutch student is able to go to a university in the United Kingdom. Living in England and hearing, reading and writing (in) English improves everyone's English. My biggest improvement is the knowledge of English legal terms. There is the possibility of taking language lessons, but I have not been to these lessons.

Campus

The University of Surrey has three different campus locations. First, there is the main campus called Stag Hill Campus. This is the place to be. The university buildings and the abovementioned places are on this campus. This campus is also the closest to the railway station (approximately 10 minute walk) and the town centre with its restaurants, pubs, bars, clubs, shopping mall (called Friary Centre) and the high street. Stag Hill Campus has various courts with houses. Most of the Erasmus people stayed at Stag Hill Court (Stag Hill Court on Stag Hill Campus, confusing indeed, but if you Google "University of Surrey Campus map" it will make sense). I stayed at Battersea Court, a place very central on campus and one minute away from the library. I can highly recommend applying for a room there and the main campus in general. Then there is Manor Park Campus, a twenty minute walk away from the main campus. And Hazel Farm Campus, approximately twenty minutes by bus. Again, I

recommend getting a room on Stag Hill Campus. People on the other campus need to take many buses and taxis, if you want to go out at night.

Housing

There are different rooms on different courts and on different campuses. The cheapest rooms, band A rooms, are mostly shared with another student or they are on Hazel Farm and the most expensive ones, band F, are self-contained flats with combined living, sleeping and kitchen area and an ensuite shower/bath room. I was in a band C flat, so in between. All houses are very decent. There are cleaners multiple times a week to clean the hallways, showers, toilets and kitchens. The prices are higher than in Groningen. Not only the costs for housing, but almost everything in London and its surroundings is more expensive in general.

Social life

All the international (non-European) and the Erasmus students hang out together from the beginning. The contact with the other foreign students starts at the airport and you will meet most of the others in the first days during the activities. We had a Facebook-group since the first day, what makes it really easy to meet all the others. Most of students were from the United States and Canada and I enjoyed getting to know their views on English but also European things. With people from various countries, watching the first games of the World Cup in the English pubs was very enjoyable. I did not only meet and hang out with people that were non-British. All my flatmates were English and after a while, I got to know some of their friends too when they came over or when we went out. One of the things I did a lot was going to London. It takes you half an hour to be in the city centre, Waterloo Station. Travel in groups of three or four to get a group discount. It might also be helpful to buy a 16-25 railway card at the station to save some money on train tickets. My last piece of advice: the Ministry of Sound is one of the world's most famous nightclubs and is on walking distance from Waterloo station, what makes it easy accessible.

Surrey Sports Park

The University of Surrey owns a brand new sports accommodation. It is built in 2010 and is a twenty minute walk away from the main campus, but very close to Manor Park Campus. There are many outdoor fields for football (grass and artificial turf) and rugby. Indoor, there is a swimming pool, 'basketball arena', gym, climbing wall, squash courts, dance studios, etc. It is a very high quality accommodation that is also used by professional sport teams to prepare for the last Olympics. The (local) students who do their full year of studies at Surrey have to sign up for a full year membership. The Sports Park offered the international and Erasmus students a four month deal for unlimited access to the Sports Park.