

Exchange at Nottingham Trent University

Nottingham Trent University

My exchange period officially began on the 1st October and ended with my last exam on 26th January 2018. I was enrolled at Nottingham Trent University. This university is one of the largest university law schools in the United Kingdom. The university has a city campus, which is at the forefront of modern legal education. Its central location makes it very accessible and close to the business centre and also the leisure centres. The city of Nottingham is right in the middle of the country, and is a renowned student city and home to 60,000 students.

Lectures and seminars

The course selection for exchange students was very wide and included modules not offered by the University of Groningen such as Law of Trusts and Law of Armed Conflict. A personal choice of mine was Criminal Law. Although this module was studied in the 1st year in Groningen, the one offered by my host university was specialised in the Common Law system, and was therefore very different and informative. The teaching system of the courses I selected included 2-hour long lectures and 2-hour long seminars per week. This system is very similar to the one at the University of Groningen; therefore, it was not difficult to adjust. The lectures consisted of 45 minutes of teaching, a 15-minute coffee break, and a continued 45 minutes of teaching. Lectures had informative lecture slides and the lecturers were easy to understand. The courses were taught fully in English. We were assigned work to prepare prior to seminars. This is the same style of teaching of the University of Groningen. Assignments were posted on the student portal "NOW". The portal was well structured and everything was easily accessible. The seminars were more interactive as the instructor was very keen to hear our opinions and answers before giving us the correct answers.

Exams and assessments

2 of the courses I selected were to be assessed by written assignments. One had a word limit of 3,000 words and another 2,500 words. This was manageable, considering the topics we were given to write on. The deadlines were reasonable, as we were given over 5 weeks to do the assignments, 4 of which were breaks from university on the Christmas period. Each of these courses was 10 ECTS. They were a fair amount of work for the credits to be achieved. The lectures were very helpful and had an open door policy in which you could consult them at your free time about the assignments. The other

course I had was examination assessed. Good preparatory materials were provided to assist in the study process. There was a practise examination given to students which was marked by the tutor and handed back as feedback. This was a good way to assess your progress, weaknesses and strengths. This was something I wished my sending university also did. The final examination conditions were comfortable and fair, and the results I achieved were a true representation of the effort I had put in.

Accommodation

I lived in student accommodation which i found online. This was a company called The Student Lodge. I had an en-suite room and shared 2 kitchens and a living room with 10 other students. This accommodation was fantastic. The rooms were a good size. The best part of the accommodation was that the facilities were very modern. I would say that in general, accommodation in the United Kingdom is more modern than in Groningen. I paid significantly more than I pay in the Netherlands. In the Netherlands I rent a studio apartment for 580 euros and in the United Kingdom I paid the same amount for a smaller room, with just a bathroom. However this was fine because the Student Lodge building offered a games room, movie room, and a gym which was all included in the rent.

Living expenses

Other expenses included groceries, eating out and transport. In Groningen, i have no transport expenses because I cycle everywhere. However, Nottingham is hardly a cycling city therefore it was either the tram, uber or walking. I used to take the tram to university and the city centre. An all day student-return ticket costs 2.60 Pounds. Which is a fair price however, if you do have classes everyday or the need to go to the city centre everyday these expenses do add up. However, the tram as a fast and warmer option to cycling so I would still pick that. The UK generally has a wider variety of supermarkets than the Netherlands, which was great. I found that groceries in the UK and the Netherlands are virtually the same in cost and quality. Others would argue and say the UK is more expensive due to the fact that the prices are in pounds. Eating out at restaurants would also be similar in prices to the Netherlands as a standard dinner in a steak house was about 20 pounds.

Visa

As a non EU, African student I had to apply for a British short study visa. I incurred the expenses of the visa, which was a little frustrating. However, I understand that the ERASMUS grant is intended for expenses like these. Both universities were very

cooperative in providing the necessary supporting documents I needed for my visa. The process took a maximum of 3 weeks. I would advise the students who need to apply for UK visas to apply in good time during the summer holiday in order to avoid delays and possibly missing introduction week and classes.

Conclusion

I utterly enjoyed my exchange experience and found myself wishing that I could continue the rest of the year and graduate from Nottingham Trent University. I made a lot of friends and hardly felt like a foreigner there. My accommodation was top quality, and allowed me to meet lots of other students. Nottingham Trent University is a modern and innovative university. I fell in love with the university and I am currently in the process of applying there for my masters.

I would highly recommend studying at NTU or any other UK university for exchange, I guarantee it will change your whole perspective on student life.