

Report of experiences Nottingham Trent University, Autumn 2018

Out of the 5 choices that I had for the Erasmus Programme, the Nottingham Trent University was one of them. I was quite happy to discover that I had been accepted for an exchange in the Nottingham Trent University. The welcome weeks began in the last 2 weeks of September, and classes began on the 1st of October 2018. As the exchange programme is equivalent to half of the third year as part of the International and European Law Bachelor's at the University of Groningen; the programme constitutes a total of 30 ECTS. The Programme lasted a total of 4 months.

At the Nottingham Trent University, the courses that were available for the half semester were as follows; 1) Land Law 2) Law of trust 3) Comparative Law 4) Legal Method 5) Laws of Armed Conflict 6) Criminal Law. All these courses were 10 ECTS each, hence, I would need only 3. Regardless of that fact, as advised by my exchange officer, I applied for all of these courses to be approved by the Board of Examiners at the University of Groningen, just in case there were any issues regarding coinciding schedules or a lack of seats. After all the courses had been approved by the Board of Examiners, it was time for me to choose which ones I would participate in. As I had already completed the Criminal Law course in my home University, I believed it was a wiser option to study new courses in order to achieve a more adept understanding of law. Therefore, initially I chose Land Law, Legal Method and Laws of Armed Conflict. Before my classes actually began, I received a copy of my time-table and saw that the lessons for Land Law coincided with the other two aforementioned courses that I chose. This led me to make an application to change the Land Law course to Comparative Law. In a matter of days my courses were switched, and my classes began.

All three courses were essay-based courses; this meant that the method for assessment for all three courses were essays instead of examinations. I particularly preferred this, because I have been sitting examinations all my life, so I wanted to try out something new this time around. Furthermore, writing essays gives you the opportunity to carry out research and broaden your knowledge about the topics at your own pace. For Laws of Armed Conflict we had 1 lecture and 1 seminar during a week. Each lecture was 2 hours long and the seminar was also for 2 hours. In the lecture, the lecturer presented a slide-show explaining the topics we addressed weekly, and these topics were discussed and elaborated upon in the seminars following the lectures. All the lectures were very informative, and the first-hand approach in communication that was used during the seminars helped a lot.

For Comparative Law, it was the same, 2 hours of lectures and 2 hours of a seminar. This course was more history-oriented, and although not one of my favorites, the convenient methods of teaching and light-heartedness of the professors made it an easy ride. Legal Method did not have a lecture, but instead it had a 4 hour seminar every week from 9 to 1 on Thursdays. In the beginning I used to dread those Thursdays, and a cup of coffee was mandatory in order to sit

through those 4 hours, despite the 30 minute break we had. However, what I noticed towards the end was that I did not need coffee any more, and waking up became much easier. I guess that the course had finally gripped me, and it did not seem all that dreadful anymore.

This exchange programme turned out to be quite expensive for me, considering the fact that I am an overseas international student paying international fees. Furthermore, the Erasmus Grant that I received does not even amount to one-third of what I had to pay. Since I hold a Dutch Residence Permit, but have an Indian passport, in order to study in the United Kingdom I needed a UK visa. The cost of this visa itself was approximately 400 euros, all of which I had to incur by myself. I was lucky to find accommodation near the University for the period of exchange, which was 4 months in total, but I had to go through a lot of hassles to find it. All the University accommodation was either full or out of my budget. And no agencies or landlords were giving studios or house-shares for less than 6 month contracts. However, as I mentioned, luckily I found a house-share where the landlord felt pitiful for my situation and allowed me to make a special contract of 4 months. The rent was 380 pounds per month, and there was a deposit of 300 pounds to be paid as well. I was not paying so much for transport, because I was located very near to the Campus, although there is a very convenient tram system within Nottingham, and the taxi service is also quite reasonable.

All in all, it has been a pretty smooth-sailing experience. The University staff was very helpful and welcoming. Students from other Erasmus universities were very friendly and I met some nice people who I still connect with. Professors were also very lively people who consistently tried to keep the learning experience interesting. There were many student events organized by the University, but I only attended a couple of them because I had other obligations to attend to. My advice to anyone who would like to choose Nottingham Trent University as an Erasmus location would be to try and organize accommodation a few months in advance in an area that suits your needs. There are ample activities to partake in within that city, for example, in my free time I would go to the gym a lot. Finally, I would like to state that it was a good experience and I was able to see an environment I probably would not have had to travel to if it was not for the Erasmus Programme.