

Exchange report Nottingham Trent University, UK, Autumn Semester 2019-2020

Dear Reader,

If you are interested in applying to Nottingham Trent University (NTU) for a semester abroad, I would highly recommend you make NTU your first choice. In this report I would state the reasoning behind such a bold statement as well as include some information on the university in general, the courses and social life.

Nottingham City/ Nottingham Trent University

This university was my first pick amongst for several reasons, firstly, Nottingham Trent University is one of the best and most learned universities in Mid Eastland England in the field of Law and commerce which are one of my interesting subjects. I planned on also taking a Master program there right after I graduate from RUG, given they are one of the four universities in the world who offer 'International Sports Law' (to my knowledge). The private reason for my applying to Nottingham was because I have always wanted to visit and spend time with family members based in Nottingham and neighbouring cities. I was in search of a city with around the same atmosphere as Groningen, and I can without doubt say that Nottingham delivers such an atmosphere. The disadvantage of not living in or around a major city such as Manchester, London, Liverpool, Sheffield was not felt because those cities were an hour or two away by train.

Introduction Week

During the start of the school year, just like every other university there was a whole week dedicated to welcoming and touring both international as well as new students around the university and the city. This week is referred to as; **Freshers week**. This week in my honest opinion, is one of the best weeks and most informative in my whole stay. Not only do you get to do a lot of fun activities, you also get to socialize to the maximum. During this week, all associations and societies get a booth and do nothing but pass on necessary information as well as try to convince you to join their societies. At the end of the week, my work desk was full of nothing but vouchers, leaflets, free goodies. There was a major orientation event which I personally believe very useful and important because it covered various aspects such as: healthcare, transportation information and subsidies, sports information, volunteer and employment opportunities.

Everyone is given the opportunity to register with a medical practitioner free of charge (that's why you're required to have a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC). Depending on how far you live from campus, you're offered student discounts on your bus or train travels. These were very helpful in my case and saved me a lot on transportation costs.

The student card which you need to access majority of the buildings around the campus except the Chaucer (Law building) is also made and given to you on that day, which is why it is important to not miss any day of the introduction week.

Courses

Aside from the academic objective of going on exchange, it should also be for fun and that is why this would put a smile on your face when I tell you that a few course (as at 2019 – 2020) were coursework, which meant that there were no exams required but rather mandatory attendance and submitting a paper at the end of the semester.

In comparison to the standard at RUG, the grade system at NTU is relatively complicated and personally slightly lower than Dutch standard. However, as I mentioned earlier, attendance is mandatory. You are required to follow every lecture and seminars even more as they contribute to your overall grade. The three courses I took were:

- Land Law – was an exam based assessment with a seen question and 2 unseen question. In other words, you are given one question to prepared by yourself prior to the exam and answer in the exam alongside two unknown questions.
- Legal Method – this is a scale up course with a coursework assessment.
- Law of Armed Conflict – This is a coursework assessment, with mandatory attendance on both lecture and seminar. A lot of attention and research is required for this course.

Encounter with lecturers and study hours

Contact hours and reading hours obviously vary according to the course, it's objective and overall credit. In general, the lecturers are very friendly and approachable, they respond relatively fast to emails if you keep the question concise and to the point. I personally, went to some of my lecturer outside lecture hour on certain topics I did not understand in class and they did a very good job in clarifying.

When applying for the exchange program, I would advice you do so in advance because the closer you get to the begin of the semester the more you would have to wait for a response even on pressing matters. In general, the response period is one of the fastest I've seen.

Housing

With regards to housing, I would recommend you start searching at least 2 months in advance in order not to be stranded or left with minimal choice. My search was a bit easier because I had relatives in Nottingham who aided me in finding a place. Nonetheless, rents there are made weekly or every other week as oppose to monthly or yearly. In addition to that, student accommodation tend to give first year students priority because they would be staying for a year or more. Cannot say much on the subject matter because I did not have any difficulty in that regard. One thing I can say is, irrespective of wherever you find an accommodation, so long as it is within Nottingham you will be just fine because the transport system is one of the best (highly organized and prompt).

Costs of living

First and foremost, it is best to have a MasterCard because domestic banks might not always be accepted outside the UK and also for security purposes. I forgot to keep in mind that exchange rates also have an effect on the price of commodities and many other things. Just because a product is slightly cheaper in pound does not necessarily mean it is in comparison because Euro is lower than pound and that can be quite deceitful. Eating out is relatively cheap for the quantity of food you get (plates are very well filled), outing compared to Groningen is quite expensive because you have to pay for entrance but luckily are allowed to keep your coats on (that's very uncomfortable) considering that the bar and or clubs are usually packed.

Flight to and from Nottingham or England in general are relatively cheap compared to anywhere else, so I would recommend saving up and use England as your point of departure for such trips. Was able to travel various parts of Europe and occasionally come back to see family members in the Netherlands due to how affordable the tickets were.