

My year abroad

Preparation:

From September 2019 to September 2020 I took part in the Erasmus program and studied at the Rijksuniversiteit Groningen. This was a mandatory part of my degree programme in Oldenburg.

I am a foreign Dutch girl, but I have never lived in the Netherlands. That`s why I was overly excited to „go abroad “.

I wanted to know what studying was like here.

Furthermore, I saw it as a great opportunity to improve both my English and Dutch.

I was very curious if there were any differences in studying in the Netherlands compared to Germany.

Especially as it is a neighboring country.

Before the stay we were provided with information about how the degree program was like in Groningen. Before we moved to Groningen, I felt prepared for the study.

Arrival and stay

Finding a room was difficult at the beginning as there were a lot of other students who were looking for a room at that time.

I went to some *Hospis*, which was an exciting experience already. I had never had a *Hospis* before. That could be the reason why my first one was a big failure. But very quickly I got to know how those gatherings worked and I was lucky to get a nice room offered with 3 other girls.

Moving to Groningen went quick and smooth. The room was already furnished so I only had to take my own belongings with me.

Study at the exchange university

At the university I took part in English classes.

There are some things that are the same as the degree program in Oldenburg, such as Tutor Groups but there were main differences as well.

In Groningen you were part of a Learning Community (eg Global Health or Molecular Medicine)

You basically see the people who are in the same LC as you are most of the time (during lectures and the tutor groups).

In this groups you also had to solve tasks – depending in which LC you are

There was a lot of self-studying which had the great advantage to schedule your day relatively as you like.

Everyday life and free time

At the university I went to English classes but I was also eager to participate in extracurricular activities (Dutch ones if possible)

The RUG has various *studentenverenigingen*, student associations where you can get in touch with other students very easily.

I went to theatre classes. And I must admit that this was the best choice ever.

The classes were in Dutch. That's how I got in touch with a lot of Dutch students.

They say student associations work as a *snelkookpan*, if you join the events you will get to know a lot of people amazingly fast. And this was true.

Conclusion

I am grateful that I had the opportunity to come here.

I made friends for which I am very thankful for and made wonderful experiences. It gave me a wider view on culture differences and helped me to become more independent. I know that I had a great advantage- I already spoke a bit Dutch. But I know for sure that students are open and welcoming. *Kom maar gewoon lekker langs!*

The pandemic indeed made it hard to experience student life in Groningen. It was a pity that summer was ahead and a lot of restaurants and bars were closed.

Nevertheless, the University acted very quick on this matter which is something I really want to point out.

Online lectures were given very quickly, and we were provided with necessary information on how the program will continue.

Additionally, you could talk to you LC tutor when you had concerns.

To put it in a nutshell: If you want to get an experience of a cozy city with a lot of students- and with that a lot the city offers for students- don't think too long and take the opportunity to come here.

I am very thankful for the opportunity and would do it again.

In fact, I am staying even longer now

