

Student experience report

Ali Soleymani

Host institute: Groningen University, Netherlands

I am Ali Soleymani, master of Cognitive Neuro Psychology. In August 2016, I accepted in ERASMUS program for doing my semester abroad in Groningen University. Regarding the choosing the right country and the suitable program, I had specific criteria in my mind. First, my host university rank was very important for me and Groningen University is one of the best 100 universities. Second, the research opportunity and research focus; my research interest is a new cognitive paradigm for mental disorders treatment which unfortunately this topic was completely unknown for the lab directors in Oldenburg university and I search the labs in Europe which they offer the opportunity to research in this area which in Netherlands we have 4 powerful lab that they provide great condition for research in this area. Third factor was the living cost. I really liked to study in one of the England universities, but the living costs was too high and it was not possible for me to handle this problem. Finally, I reach to the conclusion that Groningen University and Netherlands is the best option and I apply for it and luckily I accepted.

One of the great advantages of Groningen is that it is so closed to Oldenburg and you can go and turn back with 15 euro and it take no longer than 2 hours with bus and it's cheaper if you use the Bla Bla Car. Since the first 2 months of my study, I had only one course in one day, I would go and turn back in a day. So, traveling is not a big challenge. For arrival, every things was clear and we had a introduction day which they provided necessary information, city guide and a party in a bar.

Accommodation is one of the biggest challenges. Generally living cost is higher than Germany. The first days which I had to stay in Groningen, I lived with one of my friends, because the accommodation was very expensive and very difficult to find. Finally I paid one months as mediation fee to a house agency which they find a place for me.

Studying in Groningen University generally is a great experience. You can experience a high class educational system. Courses information, application, exams and grading system are so clear and student-friendly!

One of the positive aspects of Groningen is that the campus is in the city center. So, always you can see a warm city full of warm and friendly people from all around the world. The vibrant city of Groningen has a lot of options for an enjoyable free time. If you are interested in night life, believe me it is one of the best option in the world. If you like out door and sign seeing you can find huge beautiful parks in Groningen and around it. In my free time, usually I used to meet my friends and we walked in city center. Cycling around the city is also one of my habits.

For the first tips, I advise you to search for an accommodation if you are accepted at Groningen University. Second, be careful about the different educational system in Netherlands. For example, you have only one-time opportunity to improve your exams grade.

And finally, I believe that although leaving your current country and staying for a short time in another country is a little challenging, it worth to experience it and I think it has a great impact on your personality in the positive way.

Warm regards,

Ali