

**EXCHANGE REPORT****Name**

Akash Singh

**Year and term for exchange**

Fall 2019

**Exchange university**

TU Delft

**Degree programme**

MSc in Systems, Control and Robotics

## The Vibrant Netherlands, an easy stay with Erasmus

### Before departure

An opportunity to spend a semester in another beautiful country and studying at another high ranking university is something no competitive and outgoing individual would let go. That too when the Erasmus programme is highly supported by institutions and well documented.

According to the updated rule, non-EU students can stay up to 360 days in the Netherlands, with a valid Schengen Visa and a residence permit issued by a member European union country. Further conditions and requirements can be found on the Dutch immigration and TU Delft's website. Everyone is required to register in the municipality of the city you will be residing in. No separate vaccinations are required, though you have to appear for a screening for Tuberculosis once you arrive in the Netherlands.

### Upon arrival

An introduction program takes place during the 2-week period before beginning of the semester, from around 15<sup>th</sup> August. But due to my ongoing summer job, I couldn't attend which is still a big regret for me. It involves all sorts of events, activities and seminars to get you acquainted with the culture and academics. I arrived just 2 days before my classes would officially start. Besides each department's club/section, there are numerous student clubs. One can easily find one to their liking.

### Financials

Every student going on exchange within the EU countries is entitled to Erasmus grant, which is detailed on the KTH-Study abroad webpage. It is sufficient to cover around 50% of your cost of living in the Netherlands. The groceries are cheaper as compared to Sweden, while getting around using public transportation is quite costly. Accommodation is comparable, though I would still stay a bit expensive compared to Sweden.

A great tip to save money is to get a second hand bike and use it for daily commute. I loved biking, as the terrain is flat, the sceneries along canals and grasslands is nice. The bike rental service Swapfiets is another lucrative option, although it requires a Dutch bank account to sign up for this service. Another advice, to save money and the planet, is to go for more vegetarian options for your meals.

### Accommodation

While the university does help in getting the accommodation, but it can become very competitive given large number of students and very few places. So earlier you apply, the more chances you have of getting an accommodation closer to the campus. The other options are well detailed on the TU Delft's website, though most of them are equally or more expensive than the university aided apartments. Finding a room yourself on the Facebook groups can get you an economical accommodation in a nice location, but beware of scammers. I could not get a place close to the campus, rather I was offered a

room in a shared apartment by the university in a different city, the Hague. So my daily commute was around 12km each side on bike.

### **University and studies**

The university lives up to its reputation and ranking. The big sprawling campus, with state-of-the-art departments, and an incredible sports and hobbies center, "X". The research opportunities are immense, and they offer a huge number of courses varying from all the disciplines of science and engineering. Although there will be some restrictions being an exchange student on what courses you can or cannot take, but they can be known beforehand with the help of your coordinators and thus a study plan can be prepared well in advance. Though for EEMS students, most of the advanced-level courses are provided during P3-P4, but you can find some courses to your suiting during P1-P2 as well.

The subjects carry less credits as compared to KTH, where every course is 6-7.5 credits, which leads to reading 3-4 courses during every quarter. As a result, the studies are very hectic. Unlike KTH, there are no exercise sessions, and the homework assignments or the course projects are supposed to be completed by yourself, though mostly in groups of 2 or more people. So, balancing the difficult courses with the easy ones is crucial, unless you want to be burdened with studies which does not leave any time free for any other activities.

The medium of instruction is English. There are Dutch and some other language courses that you can always take during any quarter and get them counted towards your non-technical course requirement.



### **Courses**

I read 2 courses on Optimization, and I tried some mechatronic and system design courses as well. Since I'm following the System theory track, these courses can be transferred into my optional courses, as was verified by my program coordinator. The optimization courses were very math intensive, but I feel very informed after learning about them. I took the design courses to experience a different discipline than just maths. Though I do not see them being used in my future very much, these courses were still nice to learn.

### **City and country**

The Dutch culture is very laidback, as in people like to chill a lot and do not take much stress about the work. Also, the society, and not just the student community is very diverse, comprising of people from all nationalities.

The Netherlands is blessed with beautiful windy weather and vast flat lands. The canals built along the roads, running through the fields make biking a very calming experience. While the students have their own share of parties going on, city of the Hague also offers a vibrant nightlife. Also, Amsterdam is 40-min far by train and is a party place any time of the year, or day.



Being well connected to many European countries by railways and roads, there are many options to feed your wanderlust. Also, Erasmus student network arranges some trips during the semester, so you can always go with them.



### **Leisure and social activities**

Whatever little spare time students get, they like to spend time training or in some hobby classes. X is a great place for all these activities at one place. Space and equipment for most of the sports is available, and a well-equipped gym. Whether you're interested in badminton, tennis, ju-jitsu, climbing, soccer – you can find something for yourself. The classes are provided for all sorts of dances, music, debate, pottery and other skills as well. All of these are available with different subscription options.

Much like KTH, every department has its own bar which is open on specific days of a week. Though Architecture section's Bouwpub stands out from the rest. You will always find it bumbling with the crowd whenever its open. The best part – price of beer is 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of cheapest beer you can find in Stockholm.

### **Other recommendations and observations**

Spending a semester abroad with Erasmus exchange is a great opportunity for many different things. It requires a fair amount of planning though, but help is available at every step, you just have to ask for it and the exchange program could be one of the best memories of your student life