

**EXCHANGE REPORT****Name**

Siyu Wang

**Year and semester for exchange**

2022 Fall

**Exchange university**

KU Leuven

**Degree programme**

Msc Architecture

## Play hard and study hard in Belgium

### Before departure

I was interested in schools that offer English programs so I was considering Belgium and Netherlands. Also, I would like to live in big cities so I found KU Leuven which has interesting studios and courses on the Brussels campus.

### Upon arrival

I arrived one month before the semester started and I signed up for the summer school. The summer school was about three months and it can be used for 3 credits. In the summer school, I met some interesting friends upon arrival. And on the orientation day, there were some activities to show us around Brussels which was also a good time to meet new people.

### Financials

I received 400 Euros every month for my exchange studies and I used it for my accommodation. For other fees, I would say it's kind of the same as in Sweden and a little bit cheaper. I could save more money in Belgium.

### Accommodation

The faculty of architecture locates in Brussels and Gent, and KU Leuven doesn't offer accommodation at those two campuses. So I had to look for housing in Belgium by myself and it's easier to find housing in Brussels than in Gent but Gent is more friendly for a living if you prefer a quiet life. I lived in a studio room which cost 800 Euros per month. It also has study rooms and a gym for residents. It's important to look for accommodation as soon as possible.

### University and studies

The university is good but you need to spend more time on studies than at KTH to get the same credits. It offers an English program but you can also choose Dutch-speaking courses. And if you choose the Dutch-speaking course, the tutor will speak with you in English. The duration of courses is longer than those in KTH, which will have time for discussion and preparation for the classes.

### Courses

I chose four courses which are 30 credits in total. The studio which is the most important one takes up 15 credits. And I chose two theory courses and one elective course. For the studio, there are lots of choices and exchange students can choose studios in year one of the master's program. For others, you are free to choose whatever course you want to take in both two years. I learned more about technology and design, urban studies, and project management at KUL.

**City and country**

KUL has courses both in Gent and Brussels. Exchange students can choose the course from both campuses no matter which campus did they choose before. And it's possible if you live in Brussels but have a course in Gent because it only takes a half-hour train to get there. Brussels is bigger, has more fun places also noisy sometimes. And Gent is smaller, quieter, and more beautiful than Brussels. The courses don't have too much difference.

**Leisure and social activities**

The beer culture in Belgium is so attractive and you can get really good beers there. I had great beers in Belgium every time with friends. And the people there are friendly and easy to make friends with.

**Sustainability**

There are lots of vintage stores in Belgium and I bought some second-hand clothes there. Also, I went to a climate parade in Brussels to help with environment protection. For vegetarians, lots of restaurants offer them options for vegan food.

**Other recommendations and observations**

Don't forget to try the fries and waffles!