

**EXCHANGE REPORT****Name****Year and term for exchange**

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2019/2020 autumn

Exchange university

TU Delft

Degree programme

Real Estate and Construction Management

“Bitterballen and more”

Before departure

The TU Delft represents one of the best universities in the field of architecture and the built environment. Therefore, doing an exchange at one of the highest ranked universities represented a challenge for me. In fact, that the courses in the field of real estate and construction management are similar to the courses at KTH it was possible to include them as program courses. The Netherlands are representing an open minded and social country which is known for their high proficiency in English.

Upon arrival

The university offered an introduction program (about one week) for all the upcoming students in the middle of august. I would highly recommend the participation during these social events in fact that it was easy to meet new friends and to get to know the university during different kind of activities. It is important to mention that an ethics workshop is held for all new students in the department of Architecture during the last days of August. This workshop is mandatory and will be rewarded with one credit point. In addition, there is a faculty meeting taking place, where students of the second year are showing you their specific faculty. Once you have managed all these preliminary activities, the semester begins in the first week of September.

Financials

During my exchange study at the TU Delft, I've received the Erasmus scholarship. which is about 430€ per month. This corresponds to the average rent for one of the student accommodations in a regular dorm in Delft. In general, the expenses for food and drinks in the Netherlands are much lower compared to Sweden. In terms of grocery shopping, I would recommend the market in Delft, where you can buy fresh food for a small amount of money. In fact, that my study program was located in the architecture faculty I was able to join the Bouwpub (architecture pub) on a regular base. This is a place, where you can have drinks with other students and friends. It is common in the Netherlands to have a drink after a long study day. Therefore, you will appreciate that the prices are pretty low (only 1€ per beer). You should also be aware that teachers also come to the pub to make small talk with their students and get to know each other. This might be a bit strange at the beginning, in fact that it is different compared to the Swedish culture, but you will get used to it.

Accommodation

During the application process, you have the possibility to use the university's services to find an accommodation. Therefore, you're getting access to a local housing platform (which is called DUWO), where you can apply for a specific room. This is usually taking place 3 months before the departure. You're also able to find an accommodation on your own. Nevertheless, this might be difficult in a student city like Delft. You should be aware of that! If you still decide to find an accommodation on your own, then I recommend one of the Facebook pages. These are also offering rooms in The Hague and Rotterdam, two bigger cities which are only 10-20 minutes away from Delft.

I used the help from the university, for which you have to pay 200€ extra, yes that is a bit annoying, but it is also way more comfortable. I found a room in a dorm opposite the architecture faculty. You can see my view in the first picture (see picture 1). My room was located in a 5-room apartment, where I've shared the kitchen and the bathroom with four other international students. In addition, we had two bathrooms and a piano!! in our living room. The name of the accommodation is: Michiel de Ruyterweg. I would recommend the accommodation, not only because it only takes 2 minutes to my lecture hall, there is also a lot of social interaction taking place. The courtyard offers space for barbeque and smaller sport activities.



Picture 1: My view from my room.

University and studies

The TU Delft is offering several study packages for exchange students, from which I've chosen the course package in Management in the Built Environment. This one is the most similar to my master program at KTH. Important to mention is that you have to apply for a specific course package, which includes 4-5 courses for the semester. You are not allowed to combine courses from different packages. This has the benefit that none of these courses will overlap and it feels like you will start a regular master program at your exchange university.

The course package I've chosen included 55 students, from which I've been the only exchange student. This surprised me a bit at the beginning, but it is also not that important. In fact, that there are only 55 students it is possible to get to know more or less all students. You will have a lot of group work and interaction in every course. In addition, the relationship to the professors (which have at least 2-5 sub-professors for individual tutoring sessions) is quite close. Instead of just having presentation, it is common to have debates and daily assignments. You should be aware that the study load at the TU Delft is much higher than at KTH. You have weekly presentations, assignments and exams. Therefore, you're getting graded and feedback on everything. These tutoring sessions will help you to improve your work from week to week.

Courses

I've taken four courses during my exchange at the TU Delft. Therefore, the first two have been part of the first period and the second two of the second period. Important to mention is that the study load in the course "Design and Construction Management" is much higher than in the other courses. It requires the reading and summarizing of around 200 pages a week, weekly assignments, group presentations and peer reviews. Nevertheless, when I'm looking back I would describe it as one of my best courses I've taken so far. You will increase your knowledge in more or less every aspect which is related to construction management. Furthermore, it helps you to present and debate about topics in front of everyone. In order to ensure effective group work you're getting graded from you're group members as well (this is not anonymous, so you can see who's giving you what kind of grade). This grade will also be part of your final grade. Be aware that this can improve but also inhibit your group upcoming work.

The second course during this term was called research methods introduction. It was based on an individual research proposal, which should prepare you for your master thesis. Therefore, you're getting weekly tutoring sessions from one of the professors who is specialized in this field. It helped me to understand basic components of research and helped me to find inspiration for my final master thesis.

The courses in the second period are based on two big assignments. In addition, you will have weekly exams based on literature in the REM. The assignments were mainly practical related and especially the one in housing policy, management and sustainability was a lot of fun.

AR1R016	Design and Construction Management
AR1R055	Research Methods Introduction
AR1R025	Real Estate Management
AR1R035	Housing Policy, Management and Sustainability

Table 1: Course package in Management in the Built Environment

City and country

The Netherlands are representing an open minded and friendly country. I have been in touch with many Dutch students who will hopefully remain as friends for the rest of my life. All in all, the atmosphere of the student city was amazing. It was super easy to get to know a lot of new people. In contrast to Swedish people, they are more direct in terms that they are often skipping the small talk and talking directly about things in life which matter. I've really appreciated the fact!

Leisure and social activities

The university includes several study associations, which are taking place on a regular base. You have the possibility to join different sport or social clubs. These are mainly for free for the students (except some sport activities). In fact, that everything is so nearby it is always possible to have a drink or coffee in the city of Delft. The city of Delft looks exactly like a typical Dutch city that you have imagined. Yes, it is raining more often than in Sweden, but all in all the weather was surprisingly good. Especially during the first months of my exchange (august, September) it was possible to have a dip into the ocean. In fact that I lived in a student accommodation (with other exchange students together) it was possible to have a lot of social interaction with flatmates. We did a lot of activities together (visiting Belgium, Paris, Amsterdam) during the free time we had. This was especially during the first weeks of each period possible.



Picture 2: market square



Picture 3: Canal in Delft

Other recommendations and observations

All in all, the TU Delft represents an amazing university for an exchange semester. You might have to study a bit more than at other universities, but the interaction and the country in general are worth it. So, don't be afraid of the workload, it is a lot, but there is still space for other social activities, like eating Bitterballen with friends.

If you have further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me: matthei@kth.se



Picture 4: Dutch fika (Bitterballen (a Dutch meat-based snack) and coffee)