

Study Abroad in Maastricht, The Netherlands

My experience studying abroad in Maastricht, The Netherlands was an absolutely spectacular one. The master's courses I took while attending the University of Maastricht greatly added to my business knowledge as well as allowed me the opportunity to interact and share viewpoints with business master's students from all over Europe.

I have bulleted the top 7 reasons why I believe the University of Maastricht is a great fit for any global Gator looking to have a culturally enriching experience as well as a great time!

1. First and foremost, Maastricht is an **INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY**. For 5 months, I lived and studied with students from literally all over the planet. Just to give you an idea, my closest friends were from the following countries: Canada, Brazil, Peru, Colombia, Ecuador, Ireland, UK Spain, Portugal, Italy, France, Belgium, Germany, Holland, Switzerland, Sweden, Iran, India, Slovakia, Macedonia, Croatia, Greece, Turkey, Japan, and Australia.



Now why did I literally write all those countries out? Because I am so proud to say I have friends in all these places! The university gives you the chance to learn and interact with students just like you from all over the world!

2. In this same international spirit, your location in Holland gives you the **ABILITY TO TRAVEL**. Literally all of Europe, and even parts of Northern Africa, is a travel option, given the central location of Holland. See for yourself on a map! There are countless travel opportunities available. I recommend renting a car and seeing Holland, Germany, or Belgium for yourself, or better yet, allow the extremely helpful student organization ESN (Erasmus Student Network) take you on their planned student tours!



- The **ERASMUS STUDENT NETWORK (ESN)** staff is extremely helpful in acclimating you to your new life in Holland. From the moment you step off the train in Maastricht Station, these helpful Maastricht University students are there to answer any questions you may have, from where to get the best deals on food, to the best bars/clubs in town, and even to which Dutch foods to eat and which to avoid! If not for this group, the study abroad experience in Maastricht would not have been as excellent, and I think any international student would say the same.



- The school is amazing. It is regarded as one of the **BEST SCHOOLS OF BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS IN EUROPE**. The professors at Maastricht University are always willing to help and delve deeper into any topics which you are most interested in. The Maastricht administrative members reminded me a lot of the staff we have here at the University of Florida in their willingness to help as well as their availability and prompt response times. Courses are taught in a Problem-Based Learning format (PBL) which provides you the opportunity to discuss journal and article assignments through real in-class conversations with business students just like you, only they offer their own European standpoint on business topics and issues. And believe me; they are most interested in your U.S. viewpoint as well! This provided me great insight into the global marketplace we live in today, as well as an understanding of the mentality of future members of the European business community.
- CARNAVAL!** This week long spring celebration takes place all over Holland and Germany and is similar to our own Mardi Gras. Words cannot describe it so I encourage you to Google it and see some pictures and locations to celebrate the festival. School is suspended for this week as well.



6. **MAASTRICHT IS A BEAUTIFUL CITY.** Considered to be a “typical Dutch-looking town,” it absolutely comes alive with color and life in the spring. The flowers that bloom later in your spring semester are absolutely breathtaking. The Maas River that runs through the city adds to the mystique as well. I STRONGLY recommend staying for the full semester and not just the first half.



7. **Everyone speaks English.** I don't know if this appeals to everyone, but for me, I found comfort in knowing that the Dutch are extremely proficient in English. Even still, due to my international student friends, I spoke more Spanish than anything else, while also learning some words in Portuguese, Italian, and German.

With all that said, here are my tips if you really are considering studying in Maastricht:

- Pay attention to **all emails** coming in from The University of Maastricht as well as the Student Visa Office. In order to study in Holland for more than 3 months, one must obtain a student visa. If you do not obtain one, you will not be allowed to study at the university. Maastricht University has their own student visa office which coordinates all documents you must attain and the faculty works with you via email prior to your arrival to ensure you have all the necessary documents. **DO NOT IGNORE YOUR EMAILS.** I was lazy on my email correspondence and it almost cost me my study abroad opportunity.
- Figure out your living situation ASAP. The school has a student housing office and the earlier you get in contact with them, the better your chances are of living in the student guesthouse. This was where I made all my closest friends and it is near the campus as well. I had friends who lived in private apartments and many of them would have preferred living in the student guesthouse, but living off campus is always an option as well.

I hope this testimonial is helpful to all who read it. If you have any questions, my personal email is ariasc87@gmail.com and I would be glad to help with any other questions you may have about studying abroad in Maastricht.

- Christian G. Arias, MAIB Class of 2011