

**2012-2013**

**University Attended: Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University**

## **FEEDBACK 1**

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### **INDUCTION/ORIENTATION PROGRAMME**

*What did this involve, how long did it last, was it useful?*

A week before the start of the academic year, the international office at RSM organised a 2-day welcome trip to an island just off the Dutch coast. Incoming exchange students stayed together in rooms of 5 and along with one local Dutch 'buddy.' The introduction consisted of several team-building and bonding activities led by a professional coach. Furthermore, the local students shared a lot of knowledge on Dutch culture and gave us helpful to-dos in Rotterdam and the Netherlands in general. Also, the last night we organised a talent show, which was memorable given the diversity and variety of performances. While some of the 'bonding' activities were a bit lengthy at times, overall the introduction trip was a great way to meet everyone and make friends. As a full-year student, I came to appreciate my induction even more, as the January induction programme held for semester 2 students only consisted of a tour of the Feyenoord Football stadium. In my opinion, this was a bit short and did not allow enough time for socialising.

### **ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE**

*Style of teaching, courses, ease of access to courses, methods of assessment, teaching support*

The academic year is split into three 10-12 week long terms ('Trimesters') and is therefore longer than in Manchester. Courses at RSM are characterised by a very hands-on approach, meaning that a lot of courses will actually ask students to work together with companies or work in groups throughout the term. Applying the theory learned during the courses in practice is actively encouraged. Also, during the 1<sup>st</sup> Trimester incoming students were given the opportunity to take 15-credit minor courses, which provide the means to obtain deep knowledge of a subject over the course of just 8-10 weeks. Furthermore, exchange students could choose from an extensive pool of 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> year courses in the IBA programme. While, there are fewer course options at RSM, exchange students had the exclusive right to pick courses across all years as well as enrol on courses of the International Bachelor of Communication and Media (IBCoMM) programme. The style of teaching is very similar to Manchester: lecturers hold plenary sessions and occasionally ask questions. Contact hours do not vary significantly, however there are less seminar or workgroup hours. In terms of methods of assessment, there are usually final exams at the end of the semester and in some cases mid-terms. Exams usually account for 60 – 80% of the final grade, the remaining grades are usually composed of written individual/group assignments and/or presentations.

### **MBS INTERNATIONAL TEAM**

*Level of support, additional information that could have been useful*

I did not require specific assistance of the MBS International Office while I was on exchange, but was kept up to date over the course of the whole year of important deadlines (e.g. for handing in forms) or future meetings. Furthermore, all administrative emails and messages over the course of the year were circulated in a timely and effective manner – no questions remained unanswered in the process.

## **MBS SECOND YEAR MEETINGS**

*Any additional information that you feel could have been provided*

The second year meetings gave us the opportunity to get to know and ask questions to the final year students, who have been to our respective destinations on exchange. This was great since we could literally ask any questions related to budgeting, social life and other non-academic topics. I found this very helpful!

## **HOST INTERNATIONAL OFFICE**

*Level of support, additional information that could be useful for future students*

From the first day on, the International Office at RSM was very eager to get to know us by our names and our backgrounds. All queries were dealt with efficiently and always with a smile. For instance, dropping a course and taking a new one was never an issue and was instantly processed.

## **INSURANCE, HEALTH COVER**

*Please include any information relating to the purchase of compulsory health insurance ie costs etc. or whether this was waived by having the University of Manchester Insurance Policy.*

I did not have to buy additional health insurance since I was insured with my European Health Insurance Card for the duration of my stay.

## **INFORMATION ON ANY ADDITIONAL COSTS**

*This should be information on any extra fees that the University charged but should not include accommodation, books, transport, visa etc.*

No extra charges were incurred apart from the participation fees for the two integration trips. The first one was around 120 Euros for the 3-night stay in the hostel and food. The second integration trip only cost 40 Euros since it only included a tour of the local football stadium and dinner/drinks at a pub.

## **ACCOMMODATION**

*As much information as possible on what accommodation is recommended or not recommended.*

Unfortunately, Rotterdam and Erasmus University are not really blessed with University halls like our University. There's only 5-6 student halls in total available and the ones situated in Kralingen or on campus are quite expensive starting at about 400, 500 Euros/month. For instance, the International house (a.k.a just I-house), which is very popular among internationals costs Euros 595 per month. Also, there is a limited contingent for full year students since most of the exchange students stay for one semester only, so they are given preference in the allocation. I personally chose "The Student Hotel", a private hall of residence which is about 300 metres away from the I-house and was built over the summer. The rent was 595 Euros but also included services such as an own bike upon arrival, a gym membership, and access to a game room with foosball and pool tables. However, the management of the building just announced that they will be raising the prices to 745 Euros for an ensuite room with a shared kitchen. Nevertheless, I spent a lot of time at the I-house down the road since it was the social meeting place, while enjoying the superior services of the "The Student Hotel". Another option could be renting out a room in a private student flat in the Kralingen area with some fellow exchange students. While, it entails getting organised over the internet and everything, it's essentially a cheaper alternative and the flats tend to be spacious and well furnished here in Holland. One website I can recommend is [HousingAnywhere.com](http://HousingAnywhere.com), which is a student platform run by RSM students to match incoming with outgoing exchange students.

## **DESTINATION INFORMATION AND OVERALL EXPERIENCE**

*Transport, travel, social life, integration with local students, student activity groups*

Since most areas in the Netherlands are 8 meters below sea level and everything is pretty much flat, cycling is a very big thing especially in Rotterdam, where the streets are not as crowded as in Amsterdam. Expect to cycle everywhere from university, to the local supermarket to do your weekly grocery shopping, but also to and back

home from night clubs (needless to say at your very own discretion...). Other than that there is a good public transport network, even a metro linking the cities of Rotterdam and The Hague; also trains to Amsterdam or other Dutch towns such as Utrecht or Delft go every 15 minutes. In addition, Rotterdam has its own small airport frequented by some low-cost carriers with flights ranging from Eastern Europe to Spain and Schiphol airport (one of the largest ones in Europe) is also only half an hour, which makes the Netherlands the perfect hub to start your travels on the continent. Even though Rotterdam is not as vibrant as Amsterdam, the student social life is still good as the Erasmus University has a very international student body. Generally speaking, it is very easy to meet new people and make friends as there are a lot of international full-time students from different countries, who have been in similar situations upon arrival and thus are approachable. Also, Dutch people have an excellent knowledge of the English language – the language barrier is therefore non-existent, which makes it easier to forge friendships with the local students as well. The major activity groups are ESN (Erasmus Student Network) – basically the International Society of Rotterdam as well as STAR, which is the equivalent of Man Soc. at MBS. ESN also organise the weekly parties for exchange students every Tuesday and occasionally organise trips to other Dutch towns and the infamous Queens Day on 30<sup>th</sup> of April in Amsterdam.

### **DESCRIBE IN ONE SENTENCE YOUR YEAR ABROAD**

Even though Dr. Seuss said 'Don't cry because its over, Smile because it happened!' – I will disagree and definitely shed a tear or two at the end of this amazing year!!

## **FEEDBACK 2**

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### **INDUCTION/ORIENTATION PROGRAMME**

What did this involve, how long did it last, was it useful?

3 days trip to an island in the north of Holland, involving group work, creative thinking, finding solutions to problems - the perfect way to meet the exchange students, and make new contacts and friends. Very useful. For the second semester induction we visited the Feyenoord Stadium ( the local football team) after which we were taken to a restaurant for dinner and drinks, a nice way to meet new students.

### **ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE**

Style of teaching, courses, ease of access to courses, methods of assessment, teaching support

Similar to MBS. Lectures and workshops, assessment via exams, individual assignments, group assignments, opportunities to get bonus points through participation in research. Course manuals available at the university library. Online access to course information, lecture slides etc.

### **MBS INTERNATIONAL TEAM**

Level of support, additional information that could have been useful

Good support, although I barely interacted with them, they were very useful in sending reminders.

### **MBS SECOND YEAR MEETINGS**

Any additional information that you feel could have been provided

Can't remember what was said and not. Should probably tell students that RSM is more challenging than MBS. For example, the required grade in order to pass here is 5.5 instead of 4.

### **HOST INTERNATIONAL OFFICE**

Level of support, additional information that could be useful for future students

Very helpful and resourceful.

**INSURANCE, HEALTH COVER**

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Waived by University of Manchester Insurance Policy.

**INFORMATION ON ANY ADDITIONAL COSTS**

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Fees for the induction programs in semester 1 and 2.

**ACCOMMODATION**

As much information as possible on what accommodation is recommended or not recommended.

Accommodation is widely available, and can be found at any time in Rotterdam. I personally changed places 3 times during this exchange. Recommended to get university accommodation as most of the exchange students will live together in one such setting. However, more expensive than private accommodation.

**DESTINATION INFORMATION AND OVERALL EXPERIENCE**

Transport, travel, social life, integration with local students, student activity groups

Good range of choices for transport - metros, buses and trams are available and inexpensive. However most students get a bike, as there are bicycle paths all around the city. Also biking is much more enjoyable than public transport. Lots of clubs, pubs and venues for partying. Social life very enjoyable, people here work hard and party hard. Local students are sociable but rather cold. Probably because they hardly need new friends, like us exchange students do.

**DESCRIBE IN ONE SENTENCE YOUR YEAR ABROAD**

In the words of J. D. Rockefeller : this year has been "one long happy holiday, full of work and full of play."