



Faculty of Law, University of Amsterdam (The Netherlands)

Study Guide

1 Overall impression

My LL. M. year was a great experience! I've learned a lot and improved my legal English and writing skills. Also, I've got more independent with studying as there is not much guidance provided by UVA, and a lot of selfteaching involved (a good study group is key). The track International trade and investment law cannot be recommended to future UZH students. (see more later).

2 Making preparations

(e.g. administrative matters, finding information)

If you are having a Swiss passport there is not much to do before moving to Amsterdam. Information regarding the different Master's Program can be found on the UVA website: <https://www.uva.nl/en/education/master-s/master-s-programmes/masters-programmes.html>. Additionally, UVA will send you several emails with the most crucial links and information.

3 Contacts/Responsibilities

(e.g. important contact persons at the Partner University and Faculty)

I've only contacted the housing contacts (UVA housing website).

4 Housing

I've found my first accommodation via UVA student housing. Unfortunately, I could only stay there for half a year, so after that, I found myself a room in a shared flat via kamernet.nl (you need to pay 20-25 Euros per month in order to use the website, I was successful after one month. However, I would recommend getting a 1-year housing via university. It's cheaper and if you're having a studio (one person only/self-contained) you're mostly entitled to rent benefits (around 200 euros per month) which you cannot receive when living in a shared flat (don't ask me why). As soon as the UVA housing website allows you to apply for housing (times are online) be as quickly as possible, meaning that in June you should check your emails daily! When the application window opens choose the third price category (they have more studios available there). I applied for the 4th category before a friend of mine applied for the 3rd category, nevertheless, I only got on a waiting list while she successfully applied for her studio. UVA will eventually, also tell you to register at room (DONT do it, it's a complete waste of money, waiting lists are way too long, Dutch people apply 3-5 years prior). You can also try to apply for a room/studio at the student hotel (there are 3 locations spread around the city, take the one in the centre). They have very nice common spaces and the design is young and fresh, the only disadvantage

it's more expensive than UVA housing (around 800-1000 euros, whereas UVA student housing in the 3rd category, is between 450-650 euros if I remember correctly).

5 Arrival

If possible, book the UVA arrival days (I think there are two available dates). They will pick you up at the airport, drive you to some building where you can pick up your student ID, keys for UVA housing (if you got one) and already register at the municipality (you should do that, as only then you will get your BSN number which is necessary in order to open up a bank account or also apply for rent benefits). After that, they will drive you to your student housing (again only if you got one).

6 Telephone

(e.g. costs, carriers)

I kept my Swiss phone number (free-roaming included). The only problem I had due to the lack of a Dutch phone number was when I had to call the municipality of Amsterdam as there some number can only be called with a Dutch phone number (but again there you can also just quickly use a phone of a friend, many will have a Dutch phone number).

7 Bank account

I did not open a Dutch bank account. I used my regular Swiss bank accounts or a Revolut Creditcard. Nonetheless, in retrospect, I would probably make a Dutch student bank account (which is free) as, for example, if you want to rent a swapfiets bike you will need a Dutch bank account. Make an appointment for setting up a bank account as early as possible (e.g. ABN amaro or ING are banks that offer these student bank accounts), as they have long waiting lists, the same goes for the swapfiets bikes

8 Transport

You NEED a bike, believe me. I hated it at first but became a bike lover. It seriously is the cheapest and mostly also the quickest option and it will make you super fit. You can rent your bike at swapfiets, those are probably the best rental bikes in town and one of their shops is right next to Roeterseiland campus (the main campus for law students) costs around 17-30 euros a month depending on whether you want gears and hand breaks (luxury version) or are satisfied with a pedal brake and one gear. I rented my bike from cheapassbikes.nl (bikes are rather shitty but very cheap 10 euros a month) as I had no dutch bank account and also their waiting list was much shorter. I had around 4 different bikes (as I changed them sometimes) and always only 1 gear (it's all flat there) and pedal brake (which you will get used to). Also, be prepared for some flat tires, don't worry as long as you have them in town you will find a bike shop nearby (the cheapest one though is probably the one next to Roeters Campus, there I paid 10 Euros to get it fixed). For public transport, I had an OV Chipcard at first (which was okay but the 10-15% discount was only on trains which you don't need in the city centre). I broke the card by accident so I switched to a regular NS pre-paid card which you can top up at the station. Now, looking back I would probably recommend getting an NS flex card (again Dutch Bank account needed) costs between 2-5 euros depending on the package you choose. There you will get big discounts when taking the train (40%) which is worth it when checking out surrounding cities.

9 General information about the Partner Faculty and student life

UVA is very well organized, my specific track not so much. The new Roeterseiland Campus is very nice and modern with cool learning spaces. I also went to the Singel Library to study which is in the city centre. If you're interested in a gym membership, it's highly recommended you can use all their gyms (spread around town) I only checked out the two bigger ones Universum and Club West, both of them have Sauna included! Membership costs around 170 euros per year, you can also use some group courses then which take place there. There is also a huge offer of other sports e.g. tennis, pole dance, boot camps, where you have to pay some extra fees. But I was happy with the regular gym membership and went to yoga, barbell training, booty workouts, whatever you like. You can check this out on the USC website: <https://usc.uva.nl/>

10 Teaching and studying at the Partner Faculty

(e.g. program structure, methodology, exams, etc.)

I was very disappointed with my study program/track. Classes are huge, also due to other tracks being allowed in our lectures (we had classes with 180 people). First of all, professors even if true experts in their field were not made for teaching and unable to break it down for students. Hence, lectures were either way too basic (with study materials and exams still complex) or highly confusing. Additionally, some of them seemed not prepared for the lectures at all. Of course, not all of them are like this, I also had a few good classes/professors as well and also most of them are very approachable and happy to help you if you ask them in person after class. Nonetheless, again they're just not made for teaching but are rather researchers. Secondly, the workload compared to UZH is huge, so be prepared that you will have to read 100-200 pages per week for each course. Furthermore, a block will only take 7-8 weeks meaning that you have to squeeze in a huge bunch of study materials in a very short time. Thirdly, it happened to us twice that professors were delayed with publishing exam results, and retake exams would nonetheless, not be shifted to a later date, so better never fail an exam. Concluding, if you are expecting great and interesting lectures in small classes, I must disappoint you. There are a few exceptions, but my overall impression of this trade and investment law track and their professors is a disappointing one. Also, other students in my track (from all around the world) complained about this and handed in a complaint. Nevertheless, I've learned a lot, also due to a lot of self-teaching which is a skill one must learn at some point. Furthermore, in my opinion, the trade and investment law area is a highly interesting one and study materials helped me to get a great insight into these areas. Also, the fact that you have to write weekly assignments helped me a lot to improve my writing skills (believe me you will get better and quicker real fast). Also, I must add that our professor reacted super quick to the whole Covid19 situation and organized online classes within a few weeks.

11 City

(e.g. cultural activities, sports, discounts, nightlife, must-sees, short trips, etc.)

I can highly recommend the city! I am in love with Amsterdam, its people, the bike culture, cheap gyms, great nightlife, and all of it. One of the main reasons why I stayed even though, I did not like the track at all, was the city. Short trips to Rotterdam, den Haag, Utrecht, Haarlem, to the beach and many more are highly recommended.

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