

Please describe your experiences and comment on the following:

1. Your program of study (courses, assignments, course format). Add the exact number of class hours per course.

I only had to complete 24 ECTS so I took 5 courses. 4 were worth 6 ECTS and 2 were worth 3 ECTS. I am in Healthcare Analytics, however, all of my courses at Tilburg were various business electives. These were the courses:

- Introduction to Corporate Entrepreneurship (6 ects)
 - 1 group assignment (30%)
 - Exam (70%)
 - Block 1
 - 1 lecture and 1 (mandatory) tutorial per week. Each was 1 hour and 45 minutes.
- Supply Chain Management (6 ects)
 - Exam (100%)
 - Block 1
 - 1 lecture and 1 tutorial per week. Each was 1 hour and 45 minutes.
- Innovation, Organization and Entrepreneurship (6 ects)
 - 1 Group assignment (30%)
 - Exam (70%)
 - Block 1
 - 2 lectures per week. Each was 1 hour and 45 minutes. There are 2 mandatory case study workshops throughout the semester.
- Economics in Practice (3 ects)
 - 1 Group assignment (100%)
 - Block 1
 - Bi-Weekly Lectures and weekly (mandatory) tutorials.
- Managing in Services (3 ects)
 - 1 group assignment (100%)
 - Block 1
 - Weekly tutorials (not mandatory but they are meant to be used to work on the project with your team)

I took all block 1 courses, so I was done with them by the end of October, and I travelled for the rest of the semester! 😊

2. The timetable (academic calendar, registration dates, orientation, beginning and end of classes, exams, holidays, number of semesters, etc.).

- Semester 1 classes are from the end of August until December. Block 1 courses are from the end of August until the end of October. Block 2 courses are from October until December.
- This year, registration dates were August 15th and August 16th 2024. There are volunteers at the airport to help you figure out which train to take to get to Tilburg University. There was a mandatory program introduction on August 19th and August 20th. TOP week, which is essentially a frosh week for exchange students, was from August 19th to August 23rd.
- Tilburg University will reach out to you with all of the information you need on how to register for classes and anything else you will need.
- You don't get a reading week, however, there is a week during October which is meant for final exams of Block 1 courses or midterms of Block 2 courses. If you do not have any final exams or midterms during that week, it will act as a study break for you.

3. Procedures to follow upon arrival. List and description of services offered by the International Exchange Office of the host institution. Registration and course selection. Social activities.

- Within the first few days/weeks of your arrival, you will have to register at the municipality. To register at the municipality, you will need to ensure that you have permission to register at the location of which you are living at. When you register, you will get a BSN (social security) number. This is needed to open a bank account, which you will need to do. Later on, you will get an email from the immigration office letting you know when you can pick up your residence permit.
- You will get an email about opening a student bank account in early august. I recommend setting this up ASAP!! I set it up the week before I came and when I got to Tilburg, my debit card and pin information were already mailed to my apartment. You need a European bank account for many items (buying a phone plan/transit pass/school printer/etc.), so I recommend getting this set up ASAP. Since you won't be able to activate your bank card until you get to Tilburg, I recommend getting a prepaid sim or some type of e-sim that you can use until you get your bank account.
- The Dutch phone plan I went with was Simyo (15 euros for 15GB, 200 min+ sms, and I can use it almost anywhere in the EU). The bank I opened an account with was

ABN AMRO. This was the bank that was recommended by the school. I also highly recommend Revolut. Most exchange students had this and it was easy to transfer money to people with it. Splitting bills is not common in Europe, so usually one person will pay, and everyone will transfer them back.

4. Budget outlining the cost of studying abroad (i.e. airplane tickets, housing, vacation and daily travel costs, textbooks, meals, etc.).

- My plane ticket was roughly \$1200 (CAD) for a round trip. I left from Montreal on August 13th and returned to Montreal on January 13th.
- I paid 712 euros (including utilities) for a fully furnished private studio per month.
- I recommend getting a bike! Everyone has one, so you are pretty much forced into getting one, but it is well worth it. If possible, I would recommend buying a second-hand bike for cheap and then selling it before you go to try to make some of your money back. If that is not possible, Swapfiets or UniBike is a great place to rent a bike. I rented mine from Swapfiets for 6 months and 1 month was free. So, I only had to pay for 5 months. The cost was roughly 20 euros per month. Make sure to always double lock your bike or it will get stolen!! Also, make sure to lock your bike at bike racks and not random public locations (streetlamps/poles/ etc.), as the municipality goes around and takes bikes that are not parked in a proper location. You will then have to pay a lost bike fee, which is basically the cost of a whole new bike if you don't have insurance.
- Public transportation in the Netherlands is quite expensive. I recommend buying the monthly NS weekend travel pass which gives you unlimited rides on the weekends for a fixed rate of around 36 euros. If you plan on travelling on weekdays as well, I recommend getting the travel pass with the 40% discount on off peak hours. Look into the NS travel website to compare other packages that may be more suitable for you.
- Groceries cost roughly the same as in Canada. In the summer and fall, there are farmer's markets on Saturdays where you can buy fresh and cheap groceries. I used to get a whole set of yogurt for 1 euro!
- I did not have to buy any textbooks for the classes I chose as I found most of them online, however, I had friends that did have to buy textbooks.
- Travel Costs: Travelling is cheap if you plan in advance. Most of my plane tickets were under \$50 (CAD) but this excluded the carry on baggage that I had to add on when flying with budget airlines. I used Skyscanner and Google flights to search for tickets. I also recommend AirBnB and HostelWorld for finding accommodations.

5. Application procedures before your arrival (visa deadlines, documents required for visa, course registration, housing deposit, etc.).

- Tilburg University will send you a detailed email of all things immigration related. Applying for your residence permit is quite simple if you follow all of their steps. Do not delay this! Fill out and submit any requested information as soon as possible.
- Start searching for housing as soon as possible! There is a huge housing crisis in The Netherlands, so it is extremely hard to find housing.
- To register at the municipality when you arrive, you will need to bring your passport, a copy of your valid passport, a copy of your rental agreement, a copy of your IND approval letter. I recommend printing 2 each of these items before you come to The Netherlands.
- Bring cash! A lot of little souvenir stores or farmers markets only accept cash. A lot of other countries in Europe also only accept cash for buses/little stores. At least 800-1000 euros would be a good amount to bring just in case.

6. Address and description of housing. Cost of housing.

- There is a building called Verbs, which most exchange students live in. It is the unofficial residence for exchange students. They sell out fast so make sure to apply as soon as it opens if you are interested. There is also a portal that becomes available to you in June, where students from Tilburg University going on exchange sublet their apartments/studios. This is how I got my studio. This also goes fast so it's important that you stay on top of it and reply to as many listings as possible.
- I paid 712 euros (including utilities) for a studio and the sublettor was nice enough to leave their furniture and kitchen utensils behind so all I had to buy was groceries.
- I lived in the middle of campus and city centre and I loved my location because it was so centrally located. Tilburg is pretty small so you can get almost anywhere on a bike within 5-10 minutes

7. Other comments or recommendations.

- TOP Week: this is something that's up to you. Usually, I would say orientation week is a must do because you meet so many people (and I did), but honestly it was extremely expensive (around 90 euros), and I don't think it was worth it in my opinion. They give you some meals (not all) and for the most part, it wasn't that good (just a heads up, the dutch love sandwiches... it's basically all they eat). If you live in Verbs, you will be able to meet plenty of people so I would say it's ok if you were to skip out on TOP Week. If you live by yourself, then maybe TOP week would be a good place to meet people, unless you are super extroverted and are able to make

friends during the 2 introductory days/ with people in your classes. I lived by myself and if I were to go back, I would probably not pay for it again, as most of the good friends I made were not from TOP week.

- One thing that stressed me out a lot was their grading system. When you come to Tilburg, you will hear that they don't give out 10's (100%) for assignments. Usually, the highest marks students get are 7's or maybe 8's. Any higher is very rare. This is something to keep in mind if you need to sustain a high GPA. In addition to that, Tilburg has a weird rule called "guessing correction." Essentially, for exams with multiple choice questions, they assume that you guess a few questions, and because of that, they have some kind of formula put in place that takes that into account when generating your final grade. This makes passing exams extremely difficult, as instead of simply needing a 50% to pass, you may need a 75% to pass after they put this rule in place. For example, my supply chain management exam was worth 100% of my grade as that was the only deliverable we had for that class. The final exam consisted of 20 multiple choice questions. In order to pass, I could only get 3 or 4 questions wrong because of their guessing correction rule. You will hear that it is common that students fail classes in exams. This is one of the reasons why. The guessing correction rule makes exams extremely difficult and stressful because it is very easy to fail if you don't study hard.
- As much as I did enjoy living on my own, I do think living at Verbs allows you the opportunity to meet more people. There are 16-17 people living on each floor and there are only 2 washrooms, but your room itself is pretty spacious. I loved going to Verbs to see my friends because I got to talk to so many people. However, one thing to note was that their washer and dryer cost 3 euros each. My friends that lived there avoided paying these fees by doing their laundry at their friends' who lived in another residence called Notre Dame, or their other friends' that had free laundry services.
- Europe is expensive... be prepared
- They charge you for washrooms and most places charge for water
- Almost everyone does speak English, but everything is in Dutch (menus/signs/apps)
- It rains... a lot... sometimes it doesn't rain hard, but it just drizzles. Either way, be prepared to get wet a lot. You get used to it after a while. Most locals aren't even phased by it, so you won't see them with umbrellas

8. Add a description of about five to seven sentences summarizing your experience.

- My experience has been great so far! Tilburg is a quiet, but very clean and pretty town to live in. It is very easy to get around by walking or cycling. The Netherlands is a great place to do an exchange in as you can do many trips to other cities when you don't have classes, but you can also find really cheap tickets to fly to other countries in Europe if you plan in advance! I was lucky enough to be able to organize my class schedule in a way where I could take all Block 1 courses and travel for the rest of the semester. I have also met many amazing people on my exchange from all around the world. I highly recommend everyone to do an exchange if it is a possibility for them. It is a bit costly, but well worth it in every way!! It is definitely an opportunity you will never regret.