

## uOttawa to Hogeschool van Amsterdam

A) To begin with, at the University of Ottawa, I am majoring in Finance. However, when it comes to studying in Amsterdam, there is the option to follow different minors (International Finance and Accounting, Marketing, Exporting, etc.). In these minors, should you choose one, all the courses will be assigned to you and will generally relate to one another. What I did for my exchange was choose different, individual courses from each minor to compose my schedule. The courses I chose were as follows:

- **Strategic Marketing Management:** This class uses general marketing principles as well as common business practices to properly create strategies behind successful marketing campaigns. Rather than create the campaigns itself, the class is more about market research and industry analysis. The class has two major components on which you are graded: the first part is a group assignment where the deliverable is just a PowerPoint presentation, and the other is a final exam. Both are weighted equally. The course is 2.5 hours per week and there are 12 weeks of classes.
- **Supply Chain Finance:** We are taught how Global Trade and Supply Chain Management, from a financial perspective, can be translated in true value for the Company. The basics will be taught to the students will learn how to calculate, measure and evaluate the impact of strategic decisions related to Global Trade and Supply Chain on the financial performance of the Company and make the best possible decisions. The course has a few deliverables; there are 3 group cases, and a final exam. The course occupies 2.5 hours a week over 12 weeks.
- **Investment Analysis:** Investment Analysis provides you insight into the decision-making process that is involved with the buying and selling of financial assets (i.e. securities). The module addresses four main areas of interest: 1. the background against which investment decisions are taken, including the functioning of financial markets, 2. the main contemporary investment theories, 3. the valuation of stocks and bonds, and 4. portfolio management. The module provides you with a thorough understanding of capital markets, which belongs to the core knowledge base of finance professionals that either operate in a corporate environment, or at financial institutions. There are 2 major deliverables: a group investment report and a final exam. The course occupies 2.5 hours a week over 12 weeks.

- **Financial Risk Management:** This course is a corporate finance-based course that teaches proper risk mitigation and different issues surrounding a decision-making process. Since the course has been structured to help students get to grips with the mechanics that underpin modern risk management, the study materials will focus on three key areas that pervade through all types of risk: risk identification, risk quantification and risk management. The course has a 100% final exam and occupies 2.5 hours a week over 12 weeks.
- **Export Management:** The core content of this module is designed to teach students how to develop a structural approach to export in the form of creating an export plan. The learning process includes recognizing, understanding, and dealing with risks associated with exports in the areas of shipping, payment vehicles, foreign exchange, insurance, and product/service pricing. The course has 3 deliverables: an individual assignment worth 30%, a group export assignment worth 60%, and a final presentation worth 10%. It occupies 2.5 hours a week over 12 weeks.

B) The academic calendar changes every year, but for the time that I got here, there is a break down.

a. For Fall 2017-2018:

### Fall 2017-2018 semester

<b>Arrival days (+ check in at accommodation)</b>	Friday 18 and Monday 21 August 2017
<b>ISN – Amsterdam introduction</b>	Tuesday 22 - Friday 25 August 2017
<b>Introduction at HvA (mandatory)</b>	Monday 28 August 2017
<b>Start Lectures</b>	Monday 4 September 2017
<b>Autumn break</b>	Monday 23 – Friday 27 October 2017
<b>Final exams</b>	Monday 11 – Friday 22 December 2017
<b>Christmas break</b>	Monday 25 December 2017 – Friday 5 January 2018
<b>Resit exams</b>	Monday 22 – Friday 26 January 2018
<b>End semester</b>	Friday 26 January 2018
<b>End housing contracts</b>	Monday 29 January 2018

b. For Spring 2018:

Spring 2018 semester	
Arrival day (+ check in at accommodation)	Wednesday 31 January 2018
Introduction at HvA (mandatory)	Thursday 1 February 2018 (morning)
ISN – Amsterdam introduction	Thursday 1 (afternoon) – Saturday 3 February 2018
Start lectures	Monday 5 February 2018
Spring break	Monday 26 February- Friday 2 March 2018
Good Friday & Easter Monday (no lectures)	Friday 30 March & Monday 2 April 2018
King's Day	Friday 27 April 2018
May break (including King's Day)	Monday 30 April - Friday 4 May 2018
Ascension Day (no lectures)	Thursday 10 and Friday 11 May 2018
Withsun Monday (no lectures)	Monday 21 May 2018
Final exams*	Monday 11 – Friday 22 June 2018
Resit exams*	Monday 2 – Friday 6 July 2018
End semester	Friday 6 July 2018
Possible end dates housing contracts**	15 July, 31 July or 15 August 2018

These are the full breakdowns of both semesters. The Spring Semester has many more breaks, and the perk of the spring semester is that exchange students will get the chance to experience King's Day, which is the largest celebration in the Netherlands. The other thing about the spring semester (I am not sure if it applies to the fall semester) is that there is an additional week off. This week is for local students to write their exams, so no lectures are scheduled for this week. The week that we have off that is not mentioned is from April 9-13.

C) As soon as you arrive at the Schiphol Airport in Amsterdam, the first thing you need to do is find the International Student Network (ISN) desk. This desk will help you organize yourself. Once you find the desk, the people will arrange a shuttle for you to go to the school, collect your student ID, get a transportation pass, register with the city, schedule a bank account interview, and collect your ISN week schedule and goodie bag. Afterwards, the shuttle will take you to your home, so you can begin to settle down. I lived in Maassluisstraat, a DeKey residence, and we were provided with 3 cooking pots, fresh bedsheets, pillows, chairs, and cleaning materials. ISN week is the equivalent of frosh week, and it gives students the opportunities to make new friends, do various activities in the city, and experience various Dutch cultural events. If you register with ISN, they regularly host events throughout the year as well. After the week, you will need to go the IND office to confirm your registration with the city. Here, you will need to get your biometric information taken, and pay a fee of 51 euros to collect your Working Holiday Permit. This permit essentially allows you to be a full resident of the Netherlands, and will provide you with a BSN number (residence number).

- D) Studying abroad is expensive, there are many costs associated with living here, but the experiences are worth the while. Tuition is to be paid at the home university, so ignoring those costs, the rent price ranges from 400-700 euros a month. Depending on your residence, this will include heating, electricity, water, and sometimes WIFI. If you book your plane ticket in advance, you can find round trip between 600-1200 Canadian dollars. Groceries are around 50-80 euros a week, with changes every week depending on your requirements. Travelling within Europe is not overly expensive, but Amsterdam is not always the best place to travel from. Flights can range from 25-300 euros depending on your location, and most hostels are around 25-30 euros a night. Only certain classes I took required textbooks; however, most of the time, you can get away without buying them, and sometimes the professor will photocopy the important parts of the textbook and put them online.
- E) Thankfully, if you are a Canadian citizen, you do not need a visa. You do need to register with the city once you arrive and then make an appointment at the IND office to collect the Working Holiday Permit that was discussed earlier. Hogeschool Van Amsterdam is good when it comes to communicating with their students and will give everyone enough notice as to when housing deposits, rents, and course registrations are due. It may take a while to hear from the school after the initial process, but once the communication begins, they are very thorough.
- F) I live at Maassluisstraat 783, which is a new building (Finished in August 2017). They come fully furnished and have very spacious rooms. The room comes with a minifridge, microwave, induction stove, private bathroom, double bed, a table, and some pots and pans. The building is located a 2-minute walk away from a metro station and a 5-minute walk away from two major grocery stores. The rent here is about 570 euros a month.
- G) Unfortunately, I was scheduled for a work term this summer, but because the semester begins late here, I had to cancel the work term. The semester doesn't end until late June, meaning that you would be back in time for half the summer and most employees won't take you for half the summer.
- H) The biggest difference is that 6 courses in Amsterdam need to be taken to meet the credit requirements at the University of Ottawa. There are also many group projects. Group projects are very common here, and unfortunately, many students have the attitude of "passing is the only thing that matters", so be careful if you want to do well. The other thing is that Hogeschool Van Amsterdam is more of a college than a university, and therefore is more practical than theoretical.

- l) Amsterdam is an incredible city to live in. There are so many things to do and see, whether it be more along the lines of touring or nightlife. The people are extremely direct, but it is not meant to be rude. They are always very helpful if need be, and everyone speaks English which is great. Overall, my experience in Amsterdam is amazing. It gives me the opportunity to travel to various places in Europe and live in a city that has so much to offer. At times, you may feel out of your comfort zone, but those moments are much more helpful than you think, and it allows you to make new friends, see new things, and experience a completely different lifestyle.