

Studying Architecture in the Euro-metropolitan Heart

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EXCHANGE REPORT
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Leyhe, Meryl



Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment Delft (NL),
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The Technical University Delft (TU Delft) was my first choice for the exchange Programme during my Master in Architecture. There are several reasons for me to choose Delft. The most dominant reason is the great focus on technical courses and sustainable architecture. Not only the Faculty of Architecture in Delft, but all current developments in Dutch architecture are a leading example of sustainable planning and alternative constructions. Moreover, Delft is one of the leading Universities for Architecture and the Built Environment. Having studied in Delft will benefit my future career and has opened up my view of different solutions in designing. Before departure, I aimed to build up a personal and professional network internationally and to develop my soft skills such

as adaptability and problem-solving. I was curious about different learning and teaching practices and eager to enhance my future employability.

Most of the Dutch people speak very well English and the courses were in English as well, so there was no need for me to take a language course. The whole application process was very easy and straightforward.

I arrived one week before the introduction program, which is called IP-week at the TU Delft, started, to explore the city and the surrounding cities as Den Haag and Rotterdam myself. The train network in the Netherlands is extremely well developed and many places are easily reached



by bike. In the Netherlands everyone cycles, even the shortest distances. There are many places to rent a bike, so it is not necessary to bring a bike or even buy one there.

The Introduction Programme from the TU Delft was helpful to socialise with students from all faculties in the first week; we got to know the whole campus and the city. There were several sports programs, trips to other cities in there Netherlands and evening activities like beer-tastings and jazz concerts.

Also, many clubs organise trips throughout the semester, as well as events organised by Erasmus. I took part in a surf class in Den Haag, which was a lot of fun. Moreover has the TU Delft a sports and creative centre called X, where students can eXplore new hobbies such as workshops in ceramic-making, furniture design, singing classes, tennis, yoga, dancing, football and plenty of more courses. I was very amazed by the great variety they offered for the students at a reasonable price. The living costs in the Netherlands are way lower than in Sweden, so I could completely focus on my studies and did not have to take a part-time job. Also, I received the Erasmus grant, which helped me to finance the study-trip to Belgium, which was organised by the class I took. As an

Erasmus student coming from KTH, there are no fees to be paid to the TU Delft. Living in Delft was for me affordable due to the financial support I receive from my parents. To save money I avoided public transport and cycled most of the distances, also I prepared my lunch every evening in advance.

I was really lucky to find a place to live. Even though the University in Delft offers a program to find an apartment I decided to find something on my own because I already had some friends living there. My friends helped me to find a place to live so I moved in with two other architecture students. But I would still recommend finding a place through the University. As a student-city, Delft offers many student apartments, but the demand is still higher. Many of my friends lived in Rotterdam or Den Haag. If you are willing to pay for the daily commute it is no problem to live in the surrounding cities.

My apartment was in Rijswijk, a suburb of Delft close to Den Haag and I cycled every day for twentyfive minutes to the campus.

TU Delft Campus is very big and the different faculties are spread out on 161 hectares. Which is also a good reason to have a bike in Delft. Speaking only about the Architecture Faculty are





approximately 3000 students studying. It was a good opportunity to experience a different work environment and to learn from different cultures. The studio I choose was almost fifty percent international students and everyone had their way of approaching their design. I would say that I gained from every different approach. It helped to position myself in the Architectural world.

Each course I took was very open to different solutions and everyone had the freedom to come up with their concept. My first studio choice was 'Complex Projects' (AR1CP011), with the topic of 'Dutch Change'. The task was to design a library in Rotterdam, respecting a new typology of Libraries in the 21st century and the question of the actual need for a 'library' today. Moreover, we analysed in detail the role of a library within the cultural urban context in a globalised and digitalised society. Our tutors gave us all the freedom in designing as long as we could argue based on a detailed urban analysis.

The tutorings were held twice a week and supported by lectures of renowned local architects. Parallel to the Studio courses we had seminar courses focusing on architectural theory and methodology (AR1A066 and AR1A061) as well as on architecture history. My knowledge deepened

on another level. The projects we designed also received another depth through the Building Engineering Course (AR1A080), as we were asked to plan the buildings up to a 1:5 scale, which means drawing all the technical details and coming up with innovative and sustainable solutions.

Every class was held in English and I did not at all feel a language barrier. The Dutch students were also very eager to get to know the International's backgrounds and previous scholar experiences. I believe the Netherlands is a great surrounding for young architects that want to study and work in an international context because many big offices offer positions for English speaking students. The very euro-metropolitan location of Delft and Rotterdam offers great connections by train to London, Paris, Brussels, and Amsterdam. It felt like living in the heart of central Europe and I had the advantage to be close to my hometown in Germany. The Dutch and the German culture are very close, so for me, I immediately felt home. The small differences made the experience anyway fruitful for me and I learned to know the Dutch society as a very open, international and joyful society.

During my exchange, I made great friendships that will last for a lifetime. I am happy to have had the opportunity to go and learn.

