

# Exchange review

## Erasmus University Rotterdam, Rotterdam School of Management

### 1. Information about RSM

When you look at the information about which school to apply for your exchange, you probably will try to read all the reviews in IEP. That's what exactly I did before I chose RSM as my exchange. Here I will discuss some key points that I think is important for other people want to choose RSM as their target and also give you a short introduction of RSM.

The first point is the *easiness of using English in the Netherlands*. If English is your one and only foreign language, you have to consider a place with almost every people (regardless their ages) can speak fluent English with you. In my own experience, the Netherlands and Northern Europe (Norway, Finland... ) have a lot of English speaking people, you can feel very comfortable to live there, do not need to worry to get lost, can always ask someone the right direction to go.

I also considered the *Ranking of the school*, which is the most crucial reason why I choose RSM. I will not to mention any ranking data in this report, because everyone can find these data very easily from the internet. The best thing you will get if you go to the top ranking business school is your fellow students are all coming from the best business school around the world. For example, my classmates have 1 from Wharton B-school, 1 from NYU B-school, 1 from Richard Ivey B-school (I only list the B-school from Northern America since they are much familiar with Taiwanese) and rest of them all from the top B-school from their country. If you desire a place to meet smart people, knowing what students in other top B-school is thinking, having a party with and chit chat with them, RSM is rally provide you a very good platform. Although the professor or the class may not be that impressed compared to the school's ranking, sometimes this school is also considered as putting too much resource to chase the ranking (which is very similar to our university), you will learn more from your classmates rather than from school itself.

There's one other reason that you can consider about. RSM have a very well-known program for exchange student, "*International Business Project*" (*IBP*). IBP gives you an opportunity to cooperate with international students, conduct a consulting project to real business world. In this project, I learned the international experience, doing business in Europe (totally different from Asia country) and made some very good friends. However, this project will cost you plenty of free time from your exchange life. For me, I spent almost 2 full-days working hours per week for this project, which means that you will have limited time for party and traveling. Some of my fellow students all think this project needs too much time for them, so they decide not to choose that class. (After all, traveling and meeting with new people is also very important for exchange students, IBP

will only give you 10 ECTS and is a four months project. Other courses cost you maybe only 10 hours a week and you can also get 10 ECTS and the duration is only 2 months) If you want to visit as many European countries as you can, you should definitely not choose the IBP.

If you are a finance student, I recommend two other finance courses to you. “Advanced Valuation” and “Merger and Acquisition”. “Advanced Valuation” is a very tough course, you will need to value a stock in your final report. The professor will lead the class go through all the important valuation skills, and you have to take them into practice. This class needs the intermediate accounting skill and basic economic knowledge. “Merger and Acquisition” is also a very practical subject given the current economic situation. The professor will invite some professionals who have lots of experiences to share the practical issue faced in the M&A activity. If you are interested in Consulting, besides the IBP, you can choose “Consulting Method”. This course will show you the practical consulting skills. For example, the professor will teach you to break a big problem into very specific small pieces. This concept can really help you not only in this course, and other situation in real life.

In the material from RSM after you get nominated from NCCU, it tells you that you can open the bank account in ABN AMRO, having an office on the campus. However, some of my friends opened the account in ABN AMRO but waited for more than 2 weeks for completion. I would recommend open an account in ING. The staff is very nice and willing to help you if you have any question. Don't forget to open the online banking which is very convenient if you want to transfer your rent to the housing agency or online shopping in the Netherlands.

## 2. Life in the RSM.

Rotterdam is the second largest city in the Netherlands. If you are familiar with the history about World War II, you probably know that Rotterdam got bombing in 1940, the heart of Rotterdam was almost completely destroyed by Hitler's attack. So basically the city now has almost entirely rebuilt after the World War II. If you expect to see the old town like the other famous European city, you will definitely disappoint about this city. In addition, the main train station of Rotterdam and the campus of RSM are both under the construction of new building, so don't be too excited about the Rotterdam.

However, the life here is still very awesome, and it will be more exciting if you live in International House (i-house) or around this place. When you get your acceptance letter from RSM, you will also get the information about the housing detail. RSM will ask the housing agency (Stadswonen) to deal with the rental agreement. In Stadswonen's website, you can see that you have several options to choose. I will recommend you to choose i-house, CASA or Erasmus Lodge. I-house is the most popular one, and the rent price is between CASA and Erasmus Lodge. I-house has a very big common room for party, and you will have a very cozy private room for sleep and a kitchen and a restroom shared with one other roommate. In i-house you can meet a lot of foreign students (including the full-time student and exchange student), and it has a very big balcony which you can see

the entire view of Rotterdam. It's very popular to simply grab a book and a beer to the balcony to enjoy the sun in the afternoon.

There's one point you have to be aware of, in the beginning Stadswonen always told me that there's no space in i-house, CASA and Erasmus Lodge, but I replied the mail to ask them to find a room in those three places if they can in a polite way. Sometimes students will move out of these places unexpectedly, so you need to let Stadswonen know that you would like to move to these places. These three places are all around the same block (tram station: Avenue Concordia), 5 mins walking distance to school and in a very quiet residential area. That's why you have better live in these three places.

The other place is CASA, the cheapest one in between these three places. It's just on the opposite of i-house. But CASA do not have the washing machine, you need to cross the street to i-house if you need to do the laundry every time. I didn't have any friends who live in CASA during my exchange, so I don't know the inner of CASA. If you don't need to worry about the budget (above €600/month), the Erasmus Lodge is a very good choice for you. The big room and kitchen make you feel very comfortable.

The fastest way to school is cycling. Normally the second-hand bike will cost you above €100 in the bike shop (like the Mega Bike). However, you can find a very cheap one from maybe €10 to €50. Just ask your neighbors or roommates for the information (junkie). The best way to explore Rotterdam is also cycling. Some places like the prettiest lake in Rotterdam is a little bit beyond the walking distance. Rotterdam has a very beautiful and big lake, Kralise Plas, people always go to the river bank enjoying the sun and natural view of Rotterdam during the spring or summer time. In addition, if you want to take metro or tram every time you want to go to the train station or the central city, it costs you more than €1 for 1 way (normally within 20 minutes for 1 way). It will be economical if you have a nice bike.

Printing in university is not very convenient, and different buildings have different systems for printing. For example, T-building (RSM is located in here) have its own system to print, you have to buy a printing card at their service counter or can upload the value if you have a card with magnetic stripe (it can't be a bank card). At L-building, the printing system is totally different. You can upload the value using any card with magnetic stripe. You can't print at T-building using the card which uploaded the value at L-building. If you want to print or copy at the library, you're right, there's the other system waiting for you. Be prepared and don't be mad with these stupid things.

In my experience, the Netherlands and Germany are 2 very efficient countries in Europe. However, compared to Taiwan, the Netherlands is still not so efficient. For example, some of my friends bought the train ticket online, they wanted to change the time due to the changing schedule. The staff responded that it not possible to change the time even they wanted to pay more to cover the price online and the price on the counter. Opening a bank account will cost you more than 1 week. However, opening an account is very important for anyone. Shopping in Europe is also very easy if you have a bank account and a debit card. Debit card is very similar to the Visa 金融卡 in Taiwan, but it is much

more convenient and safer. You have to type the “pin-code” instead of sing an invoice in Taiwan every time you shop. Here I recommend other tool called “Prepaid Master credit card”. It’s essential to have a credit card if you want to book an air or train ticket online. If you bring your credit card in TWD currency, the “VISA” or “Master” will charge you 1-2% currency conversion fee for each transaction. So, having a card in local currency is needed for us. However, like Taiwan, it’s not possible to have a normal credit card if you are still a student or you don’t have the salary record. The prepaid credit card can solve the problem. Moneybookers is very convenient to use and you can save €10 every time you using prepaid master card for booking on Ryanair.

<http://www.moneybookers.com>

### 3. Other information

The best thing to live in the Netherlands is that you can always go to any other European countries easily. I list some budget airlines here.

Ryanair:

The lowest average price airline in Europe is Ryanair. If you are lucky enough, you can get a sales price €4 to London. But the bad thing is that the airport in Netherlands is in Eindhoven, which is 2 hours from Rotterdam. (Train + bus)

Easyjet:

Easyjet is the other budget airline. However, the price is not always very cheap.

Wizzair:

Wizzair is your best choice if you want to go Eastern Europe (like Czech Republic, Poland and Hungary)

Skyscanner, [www.skyscanner.com](http://www.skyscanner.com), will provide you all the prices and time tables containing all the airlines in a time. However, you sometimes need to check the price on the airline’s own website because Skyscanner will sometimes not update the price instantly.

If you want to buy some second-hand groceries, [www.gogodutch.com](http://www.gogodutch.com) is a good website to go. You can also find some useful living information like the travel destination, shop on sales or even the KFC’s coupon.

I also strongly recommend you to apply for a train off-peak hours discount card. This card can give you the right to get 40% off during the off-peak hours (after 9 AM during the weekday and whole weekend). Go to [www.ns.nl](http://www.ns.nl) to check the detail of this card. The price is about €50, but you can use this card up to 4 people at a time means you can share the cost with your friend.

Wish you all the best about your exchange career.

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