

Studying Abroad Experience Report

- 1) Are we allowed to publish your report anonymously on our webpage (without your name and e-Mail)?
 Yes No
- 2) Are we allowed to forward your report and contact information to a Viadrina student on request?
 Yes No
- 3) Please confirm hereby that you did not mention names of a third party (lecturer, landlord etc.)
 Yes No – in this case your report won't be published
- 4) Please be aware that all the published photos in this report have to be taken by you and are not the property of a third party. By sending this report you are giving us the legal right of use for your pictures (if we publish the report). The copyrights still belong to you after all.
 Yes, I confirm that all photos are mine.

We would appreciate it if you could include the following topics (the report should be at least two pages long, there is no maximum):

- **Preparation:** Recommendations about preparing to leave, for example (if applicable) Visa, insurance, travel? How was the application process at the university abroad? Were there any introduction events? Were they obligatory and when did they take place? Was there a Buddy program or tutors?
- **Accommodation:** How did you find your accommodation? Any tips about mistakes that should be avoided? Were there any special student accommodations? The cost of rent? Which area of living would you recommend?
- **Studying at the university abroad:** How was the day to day life on campus? Was the attendance mandatory? Which courses did you take? Were you allowed to take courses from different faculties? Please attach links to the course list if possible. How did the exams take place? Were there any language courses? What is your overall opinion of the university in general? How well did the university take care of international/exchange students?
- **Day to day life and free time:** How high are the costs of living in total? How much money should be accessible monthly? How much does the public transportation cost? What can an exchange student do in their free time? What did you do?
- **Conclusion:** worst and best experience

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Preparation for an abroad stay in Groningen is rather uncomplicated. I believe the biggest challenges to be the formalities and paperwork regarding Erasmus + and the course selection process at the RUG and of course the housing.

For the course selection I would advise anyone to make themselves familiar with all of the different websites and tools the RUG uses for promoting and selecting courses. The interesting courses will fill up quickly so you are doing yourself a favor already knowing how the process works as soon as you are able to apply.

Groningen has a very competitive housing market, especially for students. I was fortunate enough to find a nice place in the centre through a friend although I witnessed many people being stressed out over temporary or overly expensive housing situations. I would say that one shouldn't worry too much about the living location in Groningen because with a bike you are able to get to the other side of town quickly.



Unfortunately I was not able to get into some of the courses I was very interested in, mostly because the university is quite strict on the prerequisites for the courses. The quality of the seminars and lectures like in most educational levels depends on the person teaching. I had one absolutely inspiring seminar I loved going to. All of the readings were so very interesting to me and the vibe in the course was very good. I had another lecture that wasn't interesting at all. Most of my classes had mandatory attendance. The studies are generally more exam based than at the Viadrina although group work, presentations and written assignments are also a regular thing. I don't feel like I can give an opinion on the RUG as a whole, even though I did have the impression that the university is a little bit more square and stuffy in comparison to the Viadrina.

The international office at the Faculty of Arts was sometimes very helpful and eager to help out. At other times I felt like there wasn't much understanding for students not being able to grasp all of the intricacies of this completely different university system.

The university offers many introduction events that could almost be categorized as festivals as they impact the whole city. Most of these introductory weeks/events are organized by students for students which is a cool concept. I didn't take part in many of the events because they mostly consist of getting drunk in different places while getting to know the different associations and organizations at the university. There is one event week specifically for international students and another one for all of the new students at RUG. If you are keen on getting to know many people in a short amount of time and want to indulge in student partying, those events might be fun for you.

The extracurricular activities at the university are very prominent. Whatever you feel like doing you are able to do at the RUG, from basketball to horse riding to reading groups. Many of these activities are organized through associations, which can be sometimes closed to international students.

I had a very good time in Groningen and enjoyed my stay very much.