

Fall semester 2015/2016 at the Goethe University in Frankfurt am Main, Germany

General information

I studied at the Goethe University in Frankfurt am Main, Germany, during the fall semester of 2015/2016. The fall semester started in October and lasted until the beginning of March.

Preparation

Before leaving I had to subscribe at the Goethe university's international office. For all actions required, I got letters and e-mails beforehand to remind me about it and with clear instructions how to successfully and correctly fill out all needed documents. For some documents, you need to print and sign, and let the someone from the EUR sign it, and send it via post to the Goethe University's International office.

As a Dutch student, I did not need a visa to study and stay in Germany.

I did not get a German bank account, as all ATM's accept Dutch cards without charging extra transaction costs.

There are student dormitories available for exchange students, though not enough. You will get an e-mail if whether you are selected for a room in a dorm. Some of the dormitories are very nice (own bathroom and kitchen) and very central (close to the university in the city center), others are very old, small and far away from the city-centre. They are all very cheap compared to other rooms in Frankfurt.

As I was not selected for student housing, I found a room beforehand via the website www.wg-gesucht.de. As I was a sub-tenant, I did not register as living in Germany, but this is not a problem for the university.

Arrival

As Frankfurt am Main is not that far away, I arrived with all my belongings by car.

I arrived when the semester had already started, so I missed most introduction activities. However, the international office, the buddy program, the "International StudentenTreff" and the ESN organise many activities to get settled in the city.

Before the semester starts, you need to visit the international office to sign some documents. You will get information about this beforehand and it is all very clear.

If you can arrive before the semester starts, the university provides German courses.

Courses

I took courses from the faculty of Economics and Business administration. The courses were part of the master programs "Money and Finance" and "International Economics", and were taught in English. Only this faculty offers (master) courses in English. As I am a master student at the Erasmus School of Economics, I could not incorporate any of the courses in my curriculum.

- Corporate Finance and Valuation, 6ECTS, exam
- Fundamentals of International Economics, 6ECTS, exam
- Banking Risk Management Frameworks, 6ECTS, presentation and participation, limited amount of places so motivation letter required
- Capital Markets and Asset Pricing, 6ECTS, exam

- Development Economics II: Microeconomic Aspects of Development, 6ECTS, assignments and exam

Finances

The university requires a fee of 250 euros for a whole semester.

When you cannot get a room in a dorm, rooms are expensive in Frankfurt. I had a very large, furnished, room in Bockenheim, close to the city center, for 500 euros per month.

You get a public-transport card from the university, so all public transport in the Hessen region (region around Frankfurt) is for free.

Food and drinks are cheaper in Frankfurt compared to Rotterdam. A bottle of beer in a club is 2,50 euros, a coffee at the university is 1,40 euros. Food in restaurants and supermarkets is cheaper compared to the Netherlands, a main course in a restaurant is often below 10 euros.

The university offers sport facilities, but at my time those were closed because they were used for refugees. There are plenty of expensive and cheap gyms in Frankfurt, varying from 20 to 50 euros per month.

I had a prepaid phone card and paid around 15 euros per month for 300 minutes and 1GB.

Daily life

Frankfurt has a very well organised public transport system, though I bought a bike at the flea market. The university is very central located in Westend/Bockenheim. The city is nice to live in, it is a large city which has basically everything. I had a very nice time here. Though, it is not very special (The German culture is obviously not that shockingly different from the Dutch, though small differences you will notice very quickly). The city has a very international vibe, many non-Germans live here (either to study, either to work).

Different neighborhoods have its own nice places. The city-center is very functional with all big stores you can think of. Neighborhoods around the city center have nice streets with boutiques, cafes, restaurants and bars.

There is a neighbourhood with many bars and restaurants (Sachsenhausen). There are many (techno-)clubs in Frankfurt, though drinking on the streets is also completely normal. The international-student-organisations (like ESN etcetera), organise many activities (parties and excursions).

The river-side offers nice opportunities for runners, and there are several runners-meetups.

During Christmas, the Weihnachtsmarkten are very nice.