

Student Report University of Zagreb 2016

In this report, you will find a lot of practical information about the Faculty of Economics and Business at the University of Zagreb and about living in the beautiful capital of Croatia. Hopefully this will help you make a choice about your exchange destination if you haven't made one yet, or to reassure you that Zagreb is a good destination if you have already selected it.

General Information

I spent the first semester of the year 2016/2017 at the University of Zagreb, in Croatia. The academic year in Zagreb is split in two, the winter semester, starting at the beginning of October and ending in the middle of February and the summer semester, starting at the end of February and ending in the middle of June. Usually, students can pass their courses just by passing 2 midterms for each course, and don't have to write the final exams, meaning that they end a bit earlier than the official dates.

Preparation

After you are nominated, you will receive an e-mail from the University of Zagreb with further instructions on what to do next, if you are accepted. Make sure to check your e-mail and spam folder regularly so you don't miss any important information.

One of the documents you will have to send is the Learning Agreement for which you'll need to get some signatures from ESE, approving the courses you have selected. I provide more information about the courses later in this report.

Since the courses are in English, the university requires you to take a TOEFL test to prove your English language skills (costs around 60 euro), unless you are following a bachelor or master in English at Erasmus University.

Regarding the accommodation, I personally did not find an apartment before going to Zagreb. I looked online just to have an idea of the areas I would like to live in, but there is not much point in looking for apartments because you will need to book them without having seen them, which could be quite risky.

Finding a place to live

A few days before arriving I reserved a hostel (there are many hostels near the centre, Swanky and Chill out hostel are nice). I joined different housing groups on Facebook and I messaged everyone who was advertising for apartments or looking for flatmates. Just 2 days later I found a flat, which I shared with 1 other exchange student. If you want to live in an apartment I recommend you to share it with another (other) Erasmus student(s), it will make your stay in Zagreb more fun! In my opinion, the best areas to live in are in or just outside the centre.

The other option is to live in one of the 3 dorms provided by the university. You will get an e-mail with information about when and how you can apply for these. A lot of Erasmus students live there because the rent is very cheap, but they are located quite far away from the Economic faculty and the centre, so it's quite inconvenient.

Arrival

I strongly recommend you to come to Zagreb a few weeks before the start of your courses so you can get familiarized with the city and find a flat. A lot of new students come at the beginning of the semester and flats become harder and harder to find as time passes.

One week before the courses start there is an introduction week organised by ESN Zagreb which I strongly recommend you to attend. During this week, you get to learn the city and get to meet a lot of awesome people. ESN Zagreb is very active during the whole semester, organizing many events for exchange students.

You will also get assigned a buddy whom you can contact for any help regarding paperwork, the university or life in Zagreb. You should let them know when you are coming and they might even offer to help you with transportation from the airport.

Courses

Before arriving in Zagreb, a list of courses will be made available online. Once you have made your choice you will need to get them approved by the ESE. A few weeks into the semester you will have the option to change courses, in case you don't like them. Keep in mind that some require mandatory attendance, so it's best to check that before you apply for them. In general, the classes are quite small, and the professors are relaxed about the grades and the attendance.

I took the following courses (only available during the winter semester):

Management (6 ECTS)

A 3rd year course, in which you learn general management theories and all the functions of managers. Personally, I found this the least interesting course, because the lectures were not interactive and it consisted of only theory and definitions, meaning that you had to learn the slides by heart in order to pass. It wasn't a very difficult course, however.

Monetary Policy (6 ECTS)

Also a 3rd year course, in which you learn about the goals and functions of central banks and the way they implement monetary policy instruments. The professor is quite nice, which helped to make the course interesting. This also wasn't very difficult and if you have passed Macroeconomics you will be fine.

Business Statistics (6 ECTS)

Starting from explanations about the mean and standard deviation and ending with multiple linear regressions, this course explains a lot of statistical tools. The professor is good and she doesn't pay attention to the attendance, so you don't have to worry about missing classes. If you have passed Methods & Techniques at Erasmus it will be easy for you.

Health Economics (6 ECTS)

Personally, my favourite course. The professor is really good and makes both lectures and seminars interactive. He is very relaxed but still gets respected by the students. The course applies microeconomic tools in the health care sector and discusses the inefficiencies of the market and ways to reduce them. This course reminded me of applied microeconomics from Erasmus, but then specified in the health care sector.

Finances

In general, prices (rent, eating out, drinking, cinema, taxis, hairdressers, etc.) in Zagreb are lower than prices in Rotterdam. Groceries and clothes are the two main things that have similar prices to the ones in the Netherlands. Below you can find an estimate of my monthly expenditures.

Costs (in euros):

Rent	350
Transportation	20
Food	150
Drinks and going out	120
Travelling	150
Sport	20
Total	810

These costs will vary for everyone of course. For example, the rent I pay is quite high for Zagreb, but you can easily find a flat with lower rent and if you live in the dorm this cost will be cut down to around 100 euros. My friends and I also travelled quite a lot, which increased the costs. On the other hand, transportation costs in Zagreb were very low because the trams here are very convenient, and no one really buys tickets for them. Even though this seemed weird to me at the beginning, there is very rarely a controller on the tram and the distances are short, so I was even told by the locals that I don't need to buy tickets. Therefore, the only transportation costs I had were costs for taxis and ubers.

Daily Life

While being on exchange, university will probably not be your number one priority, so you will have a lot of time which you need to fill by yourself. This is absolutely not a problem, since there is so much to do in Zagreb. Even though it's quite a small capital, it has a lot to offer: from cosy cafés and bars to a lot of big clubs. People are very friendly and speak English surprisingly well (even at bakeries and super markets!).

Certain things, such as registering at the police station or getting papers signed at the university are done "the Croatian way", which means quite slowly and not always punctually. At times, it can be quite annoying, but once you get used to it you will also start doing things this way.

Something that you should keep in mind if applying for Zagreb are the end dates of the semesters. Due to exams, I had no other option but to return to Rotterdam in the beginning of February, even though block 3 (major courses) started on the 2nd of January. This meant that I did not manage to study for all 3 major courses which might cause a study delay. When I applied to go on exchange, this was not mentioned, so I was surprised when I found out. Therefore, I would advise anyone who is interested in going to Zagreb to talk to the exchange coordinator about the possibility of a study delay.

All in all, I can definitely recommend everyone to go on exchange. If not in Zagreb, then in a different city; it doesn't really matter where you go because it's not the city that makes it a great experience but the people you meet. With this report, I hope that I have convinced you to just go for it, and if you do decide to go to Zagreb don't hesitate to contact me with any questions that you might have!

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