



Faculty of Law, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven (Belgium)

Study Guide

1 Overall impression

The Double Degree in Leuven was a wonderful experience. The University was a lot of work and students had to work a lot. But I got to learn a lot about International and EU law in particular, had still plenty of free time to get to know a new city and a new country and make great new friends.

2 Making preparations

(e.g. administrative matters, finding information)

I can only recommend to go to any information session that is available. There is a lot of information on the websites of the universities but it still helps to get more details on everything and ask questions.

3 Contacts/Responsibilities

(e.g. important contact persons at the Partner University and Faculty)

The contact person at the partner faculty. She will answer any questions you might have.

4 Housing

Start early! There are different options - the most common ones are student housing dorms offered by the university and shared apartments on the private market. Many university dorms are limited to Belgian students only so for international students the spots are limited. Apply as soon as you can. I stayed at Waterview Residence. It offers private rooms with private bathrooms and shared kitchens. The residence is huge and overall well organized.

5 Arrival

It is best to arrive at least a week before the semester starts. There is an introduction week with activities to meet some people and get acquainted with the city. It also allows you to plan your semester and get settled in your place (it is likely that you need to get some additional stuff for kitchen and so on).

6 Telephone

(e.g. costs, carriers)

I just added some EU data and minutes on my Swiss phone plan.

7 Bank account

The best option is to get an account at an online bank like Revolut or Yuh. Cards are accepted widely. However, especially at bars and some cafés they only accept cash so it is always useful to keep some on you.

8 Transport

The best way to arrive is either by plane or train. There are two airports in Brussels. There is Charles Roi Airport and Zaventem. Zaventem is the one closer to Leuven. However, plane tickets can get very expensive to Brussels which is why I usually took the train. From Zurich to Leuven it takes about 8 hours (however it is with Deutsche Bahn) so there might be delays. You might also consider driving by car, which is a 7 hour drive from Zurich. Within the city, every one bikes or walks. The city centre is quite small so no long travels.

9 General information about the Partner Faculty and student life

The Partner Faculty is generally well-organized. They inform you well about the signing up for courses and exams. Pay close attention as there are multiple steps required. The University is a big part of the city. There are many university buildings, every faculty sponsors a bar and has a student association (which are mostly only for Belgian students but they organize parties almost every night of the week to which everyone is invited). There are also a lot of cafés, restaurants and bars where students hang out all the time. There is also a cinema and a street lined with only bars which gets rather crazy at night. However, the city is very safe and fun.

10 Teaching and studying at the Partner Faculty

(e.g. program structure, methodology, exams, etc.)

Classes are usually similar as at UZH. Participation is sometimes encouraged but usually not mandatory. Professors often use slides as study materials + pre-assembled scripts for the courses. The scripts can be bought at the Faculty shop, which has very short opening hours and long waiting lists so make sure to order the books as soon as possible. You will also absolutely need the books. There is no way around it unfortunately. Exams are usually written exams of 3 hours. Sometimes there are oral exams of 15 minutes. Very rarely, there are courses that allow you to finish the course during the semester with a paper. Make sure you try to stay on top of things. Stick to a study schedule. Otherwise the course materials will get a lot close towards the exam.

11 City

(e.g. cultural activities, sports, discounts, nightlife, must-sees, short trips, etc.)

The city is small, old and very cute. There are a lot of student clubs, bars, restaurants and cafés. There is a university sports centre where many courses are offered. The gym subscription is separate but worth it. There are plenty of day trips to do from the city (to Antwerp, Brussels, Ghent, Brugge, Dinant). Also within Leuven, there are very nice parks to hang out in, the Stella Artois Brewery to visit, the Cathedral to see and so on. Overall, it is a great city for the "Student city experience" and a very nice place to live and study and have fun for a year.

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