



Faculty of Law, Maastricht University (The Netherlands)

Study Guide

1 Overall impression

A wonderful, very intense, year! I was enrolled in the programme “Globalisation and Law” and the classes I chose were all very interesting. I learned a lot and would choose the programme again. Due to the structure of the Dutch university system, the year at UM has definitely been more intense than the one at UZH: you need to prepare for class, stay on track with the readings and the exams’ preparation and possibly write mid-term papers in a short time. On the other hand, exams at UM were almost always doable and without “surprises”.

2 Making preparations

(e.g. administrative matters, finding information)

In order to register at the Municipality you need an original birth certificate. Request it in advance as it may take some time to get it delivered. There are no other relevant administrative matters to mention. I recommend you to have a look at the website “mymaastricht.nl” for any information you may need (health, transport, housing, etc).

3 Contacts/Responsibilities

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

I cannot think of any specific contact person at the Faculty. However, in case of (administrative) questions/doubts I always used the “Contact form law” (which can be found on the Maastricht University intranet, accessible through the Student Portal > My Links > MyLaw (EN) > LAW Stud. > Contact form Law). Through this contact form you can also register for/deregister from courses and exams.

4 Housing

I was staying at the Student Hotel. It is definitely not the cheapest option, but it offers great comforts: there is a nice (and silent) study room (useful when the university libraries get crowded before exams), various study spots in the lobby and a 24/7 reception. Furthermore, every resident gets a personal bike, so there is no need to rent or buy a bike. You should book in advance as it gets fully booked pretty soon.

In alternative, you can look for an accommodation on Facebook groups (but pay attention - there are a lot of scammers), through private agencies or Maastricht Housing (the official student housing portal). You can find more information on this website “<https://mymaastricht.nl/housing/room-search/>”.

5 Arrival

I arrived in Maastricht the day on which the lectures/tutorials started. It was ok, but I would recommend to arrive at least a week in advance. In fact, the week before the university starts, the introductions days are taking place and there are a lot of planned activities, where you have the opportunity to meet some fellow students.

6 Telephone

(e.g. costs, carriers)

I used my Swiss SIM card with plenty of data/month and unlimited phone calls/texts all over Europe. So I cannot be helpful in this regard.

7 Bank account

I did not open a Dutch Bank Account as I used Revolut and my Swiss credit card which has very good conditions. It is worth mentioning that many shops (e.g. Albert Heijn) only accept debit cards (VPAY, Maestro) and no credit cards (Visa, Mastercard). If you don't want to open a Dutch Bank Account (which may take a while), I would at least recommend to open a Revolut account and order a Maestro card (which works fine everywhere).

8 Transport

To get to Maastricht, I either traveled by bus (direct Flixbus Zurich-Maastricht, approx 9h), by train (note: Deutsche Bahn is very often delayed) or by plane (landing in Bruxelles Zaventem, Eindhoven or Amsterdam Schiphol). Be aware that Maastricht is not really "around the corner" and in general, the journey to/from Switzerland takes 7 to 10 hours.

To get to the faculty or around the city, I either biked or walked. I never took a bus. You will soon notice that Maastricht is pretty small.

If you want to rent a bike, I've heard that Swapfiets is a great option (you will see a lot of swapfiets bikes around Maastricht). There are also some deals for train tickets (like group tickets, or season tickets) - you should look on the NS.nl website.

9 General information about the Partner Faculty and student life

The Faculty is well organized and the Professors are well prepared and very easy-going. In general, you will be in close contact to professors as they are not only giving the lecture but are also responsible for tutorials.

Probably because of the fact that you can re-sit exams after few months and you can deregister from courses more easily and at a later stage than at UZH, I perceived UM as being more flexible.

With respect to the student life, there are few bars and clubs that you will for sure get to know. In addition, similar as at UZH, there are a lot of students' organizations and sport associations that you can join. For sport associations, you first need to become a member of UM sport - there are different memberships and you can find more informations on the UM website.

10 Teaching and studying at the Partner Faculty

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

The year is divided into 6 periods. For Master's (law) students, there are 4 relevant periods: Period 1 and 2, and Period 4 and 5. In Period 3 and 6 you are "free" from lectures and tutorials, meaning that you can work on your thesis, study for resits, etc.

Each of the 4 "relevant" periods lasts 7 weeks, in which according to the normal schedule you will need to follow 2 courses. As a rule, for each course you will have a lecture (2h) and a tutorial (2h exercise session) pro week. You are expected to prepare and read the materials before every tutorial, so that you can participate and discuss the questions/problems with the other students. Tutorials groups are usually small, between 10-15 people. Tutorials build the core of the so called PBL system (= problem based learning), which is prominent at UM. You will need some time to get used to the PBL system, as you will need to read and process a lot of information every week, for seven weeks. The rhythm is intense, as on the eighth week you will already have the exams. In general, it is safe to say that if you stay on track and commit to the PBL system, you will pass and probably also get good grades. Most exams are open book, so if you prepare a good summary you can also write a good exam. In order to reduce the workload, I recommend you to find a study buddy and prepare summaries together. In alternative, you can find summaries for basically every course on studydrive.net.

11 City

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

I went to the theater (Theater aan het vrijthof) a couple of times - for people under the age of 30, there is an interesting last-minute discount: 48 hours before the start of the performance, you can buy tickets at a reduced price of € 10.

I also enjoyed going to the Cinema Lumière, which offers a very nice selection of movies in original language (with dutch or english subtitles). You can also get tickets at a reduced price for students.

For coffee or lunch, I basically always went to the Brandweerkantine - an old fire station which has been repurposed. It has good food, it gives you good vibes and there are always many students studying there.

If you like beer, Maastricht has its own Brewery (Stadsbrouwerij Maastricht): right next to the river in Wick - also very recommendable!

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