

Erasmus in Antwerp 21/22

Planning, organisation and application:

It was already clear to me that if I was going to do an Erasmus semester, it would be in Belgium! That's because I've always been interested in the relaxed and open-minded Belgian way of life and also because I appreciate good food.

After I received the acceptance letter for Antwerp, my anticipation for the upcoming semester increased dramatically. Antwerp was my first choice in Belgium because I wanted to avoid coming to a city that was too overloaded with tourists like Brussels. In Antwerp, there are fewer tourists and it felt like you could get to know the real Belgium and its inhabitants much better. Besides, the city is not too small and not too big. The city offers a lot to discover, but you still got a rough overview of the city pretty quickly.

At the University of Antwerp, many courses are offered in English. This was another reason for putting the city high on my wish list. The required level of English is B2. Since the Abitur certificate is not recognized as proof of language proficiency, I took an English course at Leibniz University in Hanover before I left.

I found out about the courses at the university by looking at the directory for the previous semester. However, it is always possible that some courses will not be offered, so it is always advisable to find a few too many courses first. Changes to the Learning Agreement can be made afterwards without much effort.

Getting to Antwerp is easy. German airports fly directly to Antwerp. You also have the option of taking the train to Antwerp. Depending on the connection, the journey takes about 4 to 5 hours. If you plan well in advance, you can save a lot of money both by train and by plane.

Accommodation:

You can look for accommodation in Antwerp directly on site. The housing market there is quite relaxed. That's why it's a good idea to book a hostel for the first few days and look at the flats in person. In my case, however, I decided to live in a student residence.

The University of Antwerp had already provided me with some information about student residences before I arrived. The process was very simple. I simply made a request for a student hall of residence and received an acceptance letter after a few weeks. In addition, communication on site with the rental agency was very easy, as both English and German were no problem.

In the hall of residence, everything you need to live was there. A large communal kitchen, showers, bathrooms, pool billiards and even a small fitness area. I can only recommend moving into a student residence to everyone, as it is the easiest way to get to know new people and new cultures. You often meet each other in the kitchen and quickly strike up a conversation over a coffee. You also meet people who are taking the same courses as you, so you find partners to study with straight away.

Studies:

Compared to our university, studying is very different. In Antwerp, you have the feeling of being at a school again. The lecture rooms are manageable and the professors even try to remember the students' names. You get used to the personal atmosphere very quickly and you definitely feel in good hands.

I took the subjects Omnichannel & Digital Marketing and Economics and Institutions of International Business. The material is quite simple in all subjects and is also very well taught by the professors. In all the subjects I took, two exams were required to pass the courses. In addition to the written exam at the end of the semester, you have to submit various exercises in the form of homework or PowerPoint presentations to the professors. The exercises in particular take up a lot of time, which is why I can only recommend that everyone start early.

Before the semester in Belgium began, I took a Dutch pre-course. I highly recommend this course, as you can learn a lot of Dutch in the first week and already make your first friends. We also had very nice teachers who were able to give us some tips about life in Antwerp.

Life in the city:

Antwerp has a lot to offer. With around 500,000 inhabitants, you can really find everything you need in the city. There are great shopping opportunities, a wonderful old town, many good bars and of course some sights.

One attraction is the Museum aan de Stroom. The museum is a really impressive building and definitely worth a visit. You can get inside for free. The building contains a lookout tower with a magnificent view over the whole city. A visit to the tower is especially recommended at sunset.

If you need a bit of peace and quiet, you can switch off and recharge your batteries in one of the city's many cafés. There are also several parks, which are often beautifully landscaped and invite you to linger in the greenery.

Erasmus student organizations give you the opportunity to explore the country and its surroundings beyond the city of Antwerp. The organization offers a variety of activities throughout the semester. For example, a weekend trip to Amsterdam or a tour of the EU Parliament in Brussels were offered. In order to take part in the trips, you just have to pay the amount promptly, as the places are limited. The further planning is completely taken care of by the organizers, so that one can look forward to new discoveries in a relaxed way. The tours with the organizations are highly recommended, as you are always on the road with many international students. However, if you are more interested in flexibility and planning your own trip, you can rent a car cheaply at the city's bus station. This is ideal for day trips to explore the surrounding area.

Conclusion:

The Erasmus semester in Antwerp was an incredibly great time. Through the semester abroad, you were able to get to know the country of Belgium intensively, you were able to make new friends from all over the world and you also had a lot of fun. I can only advise anyone who is not yet sure about doing an Erasmus semester: Do it! It is a great experience!