

Universidade NOVA de Lisboa - Lisbon - Portugal

Did you come across any problems during your application at the university? Subjects, country specific.

Yeah, Portuguese people are kind of “Mañana Mañana”, so it is quite often the case that you receive information quite late, and on the next day you would have to respond, so if you didn’t check your email for 1 day you could already have missed a deadline for example. They are always late with everything! It was not easy to register for courses, because you just got different timetables and classes and you have to puzzle everything yourself. I, for instance, had to switch my courses at least 5 times because I just chose the courses I liked and then I saw a lot of overlap, which was not allowed! The lectures were not mandatory at all, but they did appreciate it if you were present.

I had to choose the subjects upfront but during our first day they told us we could switch after 1 week, so we had still 1 week to figure out if you liked the course or not. That was nice! The level of the courses was very difficult, if you’re going to NOVA you will probably have a hard time. However, it kind of depends on the courses you choose. I had to do most of the difficult courses, so it was not nice. You should choose management courses, they are easier than economics. You may think that microeconomics it’s nice for example, but then you have to take the advanced one, and that’s really difficult!

How did you arrange housing, any tips here?

I did it before I left. I knew a lot of people that didn’t and they would stay in a hostel and sleep there for the first days. There is this website called Uniplaces, but there were some people that got a good room but not everyone did it, so I wouldn’t really trust this website. There are Facebook pages that offer rooms like here. I rented my room at Liv’in Lisbon. They have like 3 big houses throughout the city. I was living with 13 other people for example. It was a really nice place to live. During the summer it’s a hostel, so I could check on TripAdvisor beforehand. You have a lot of things like that!

Any tips for booking flights tickets?

Transavia or Easy Jet fly directly to Lisbon, and then you have the metro that takes you wherever you want around the city! It’s also connected with the airport.

What is the best time to arrive?

I was there one week before, and that was fine, my room was not ready yet, so I used Airbnb before and then moved to my room. We had an intro week, but not really partying. Because I had the most difficult courses there were not a lot of people in my class rooms, around 30 people. But only 2 or 3 exchange students there. The intro was not that helpful, you can meet other students, but they do have 2 associations: IESN and ELL (Erasmus Live Lisboa), they organize kind of the same activities, but one organizes it on Tuesdays and the other on Wednesday. Those organizations have the better activities, and if you want to meet the exchange students I recommend to join those. There is one area where there are a lot of nice people, it’s called Erasmus Corner in Bairro Alto where all the exchange students meet every night. So I would better recommend to join one of those associations instead of the introduction week.

International Management was very crowded, but the most difficult courses had a maximum of fifteen people. Nova Business School is a high level university, with some awards, and when you mention it to companies, they really like it. It’s really good for your CV.

Are there any specific items to pack for your region?

The weather is really nice, so make sure you pack a lot of beach stuff. It won't be below 15 degrees, sometimes you have a rainy day, but it's normally really good. They have most of the things we have here, like Lidl, there's El Corte Ingles, that's like a warehouse, where you can buy every kind of clothes. You don't need your winter coat for example. Food and drinks are quite the same as in the Netherlands. They do like fish a lot! You can buy whole fish in the supermarket.

How did you have to adjust to the cultural differences?

I had a course called international Management, it's like comparative cross cultural here in Tilburg university, and we found out that the Netherlands and Portugal are the completely opposite from each other, and during my exchange I also recognized that.

Their dinner is around ten or eleven, their whole day is different from what we have. I did not sleep in the afternoon, but some people did, I had classes in the afternoon, but Lisbon is a huge city actually, and quite international compared with the interior of Portugal.

Do you have any suggestions for associations to join or other ways to come in contact with local/exchange students?

Nova has some sports associations like football or volleyball which you can join, but I just went to the gym.

Are there any places that you have to take a visit to?

I did travel, but not that much as when you go outside Europe. You can go to Algarve, Porto, Azores, Madeira or even Morocco. You can fly to Azores for 60 euros for instance. Another nice place to visit its Berlenga Islands, only five people live there. Porto is also nice to visit, it is smaller, more student orientated (cozy), and the Algarve is a party trip.

Golden tip

If you want something to be arranged you have to ask a lot. They do provide information, but use the Facebook group of Nova to ask questions, there are also local people in that group that can help you. Stay there during Christmas, it's very nice.

You may have to stay there until the end of January, Nova does not give permission to do your exam, if necessary, in Tilburg. Take the schedule into account!