

Study abroad at
School of Business and Economics

INFORMATION SHEET FOR STUDENTS 2020-2021

The city of Maastricht



Maastricht, the oldest city in the Netherlands, gained international fame as the 'birthplace of the European Union' by hosting of the European Summit in 1991, and as the city where the Treaty of Maastricht was signed in 1992.

Maastricht is centrally located in the heart of Europe, bordering Belgium (a brisk 47 minute walk or 11 minutes of vigorous bike riding away) and Germany (only 35 minutes by car), which means that Brussels is 1.5 hours away, Amsterdam 2 hours, Paris and Frankfurt 3 hours, and London 4.5 hours. Also, there are nine airports within an hour's travel, where low cost carriers will take you to any European city in a heartbeat.

Located in the southernmost tip of the country, it has a reputation for being 'a bit foreign' even to other Dutch people. Many tourists visit Maastricht to go shopping, to get a taste of its convivial atmosphere, or to check out one of its 1,660 monumental buildings.

Maastricht is a cosy city of around 122,000 inhabitants. Known for its vibrant student life, there are dozens of student associations and organisations devoted to everything from sustainability to sports, from drama to music, and to volunteering, studying, and partying.

Maastricht is the perfect setting for a university city, with many festivals and events reflecting a diversity of cultural influences, from Maastricht's famous annual Carnival to experimental theatre, from thought-provoking lectures to lively music concerts. Going out to eat or having a drink at one of our many bars and cafes, especially outside, is a favourite pastime of both students and locals.

Maastricht is also set against a backdrop of hills, trails, and open countryside, making it an ideal place for sports and nature lovers alike.

Maastricht University

Maastricht University is highly regarded in Europe for its unique teaching style and high-quality research. In fact, its School of Business and Economics (SBE) has been awarded three prestigious accreditations, resulting in the so-called Triple Crown accreditation. Only 1% of business schools worldwide have this Triple Crown, meaning that the School is amongst a very select group of institutions such as INSEAD, Vlerick Business School, London Business School and SBE's exchange partners HEC Montreal, Fundação Getulio Vargas (FGV-EAESP), and Aston Business School.



The School is a distinctly international institution with a student population numbering over 110 nationalities. Of the total of 4,200 bachelor's and master's students more than 2,500 (70%) have a foreign background. Annually, SBE welcomes about 700 exchange students from over 160 partner universities worldwide.



Problem-Based Learning (PBL) in the international classroom

PBL was adopted by Maastricht University in 1976. PBL tries to overcome the weaknesses of traditional education by giving the students a very active role. Students do not spend hours listening to lectures – although there are some, usually at the start of the study period - but instead, per course, attend two-hour tutorial group meetings twice a week. These meetings form the core part of the study programme and are the driving force for learning. Within the tutorial groups, problems are presented as cases and researched. The international classroom underlines the benefits in the learning process of students when they work in small tutorial groups with people from different cultural backgrounds. By approaching problems from a variety of perspectives students are acquainted with different ways of seeing things and that enhances the quality of discussions. In this way, the international classroom prepares students for the rapidly globalising labour market.

A tutorial group is composed of 8 to 15 students plus a tutor: a staff member who guides the group process but who does not automatically give answers to the problems. It is up to the students to discover where their knowledge falls short and to fill in the gaps. To do so, students will have to spend a lot of time between tutorial meetings to read articles and books, and to do research in the university library.

More in-depth information about the Problem Based Learning is available via:
www.maastrichtuniversity.nl/education/why-um/problem-based-learning

Eligibility

As exchange student, you must officially be nominated by your home university. We can only accept you if you major in Economics or Business (or related). If you are a bachelor's student, you have to have completed at least two semesters of relevant study before you start your exchange programme at SBE. If you want to take master's level courses while at SBE, you have to have a valid and relevant bachelor's degree when you start your exchange here.

English Language Requirement

Since the working language at our School is English and all courses are taught in English, all exchange students are required to have an advanced level of the English language - comparable to the level B2 of the [Common European Framework of Reference](#) - to be able to successfully complete their courses. SBE does **not** require any proof of an English language test score, but do make sure your English is up to par when you start your exchange.

Our educational system - Problem Based Learning (PBL) - requires you to actively take part in the tutorial meetings. The PBL method is explicitly student-centred rather than teacher-centred, and the students are expected to take the initiative. Speaking up and actively taking part in discussions is a crucial part of the system and this will also influence your final grades. Therefore, it is extremely important that you have an excellent knowledge of both written and spoken English.

Disability Support

Maastricht University's Disability Support provides a range of services to students with disabilities. You should contact Disability Support prior to departure to ensure the appropriate services are in place by the time you arrive to our School. More information? Please contact us or Disability Support via iro-incoming-sbe@maastrichtuniversity.nl or disability@maastrichtuniversity.nl. In order for our office to follow-up on your request, we advise you to always inform us about a disability for which arrangements need to be made with regard to education at our School.

Online registration and application by students

Fall semester 2020	deadline 01 May 2020
Spring semester 2021	deadline 01 October 2020

After your application is finished, it will be processed as soon as possible.

If applicable, Maastricht University's Visa Office will contact you regarding the visa and/or residence permit application.

Acceptance letters will be sent to the students by email about three months before the start of their study and stay in Maastricht.

Academic Calendar © Still subject to change

The academic calendar at SBE is divided into two semesters, a fall and a spring semester. Each semester is comprised out of three different course periods. Course periods 1, 2 and 3 compose the fall semester. Course periods 4, 5 and 6 compose the spring semester. Course periods 1, 2, 4 and 5 consist of seven education weeks and one exam week. Course periods 3 and 6 consist of 2 weeks of skills training. Course periods 3 and 6 are not compulsory for exchange students.

Academic Year					
Fall semester			Spring semester		
Period 1	Period 2	Period 3 (skills training)	Period 4	Period 5	Period 6 (skills training)

Fall semester

Compulsory Introduction Days		27 August – 28 August 2020
Period 1	Education Exams Resits	31 August – 16 October 2020 19 October – 23 October 2020 04 January – 08 January 2021
Period 2	Education Exams Resits	26 October – 11 December 2020 14 December – 18 December 2020 06 April – 09 April 2021
Period 3	Skills	11 January – 22 January 2021

Spring semester

Compulsory Introduction Days		28 January – 29 January 2021
Period 4	Education Exams Resits	01 February – 26 March 2021 29 March – 01 April 2021 07 June – 11 June 2021
Period 5	Education Exams Resits	12 April – 28 May 2021 31 May – 04 June 2021 05 July – 09 July 2021
Period 6	Skills	14 June – 25 June 2021

Courses

Study load

Exchange students can only register for a maximum of 2 courses per period (13 ECTS) with a minimum of 1 course per period (5 / 6,5 ECTS), and only 1 skills training per period (4 ECTS). Skills trainings are not compulsory for exchange students. At SBE we consider a fulltime study load per semester to be 4 courses and 1 skills training.

Important note: most SBE courses (except for the skills trainings) are worth 6,5 ECTS. In some study programmes, however, the number of ECTS per course is different. One ECTS equals 28 hours of study. So one regular course at SBE equals 182 hours of study, of which 42 hours need to be considered as contact hours.

Information on courses

In the [online exchange course database](#) you can find all the information you need about SBE's bachelor's and master's courses, such as the course coordinator(s), learning outcomes and competences, number of ECTS, literature and prerequisites. If the information in the course database is not enough, you may contact the relevant course coordinator at SBE. You will find the e-mail address in each course description.

The online exchange course database for academic year 2020-2021 will be available as of June 2020. We do not expect major changes.

Course selection

When you select your courses, you should note that some will assume knowledge of topics covered in other courses ("pre-requisites"). If you do not meet these requirements, you will not be allowed to register for the course. You are responsible for making sure you have the requisite knowledge to follow courses that state certain pre-requisites.

As an exchange student you are expected to take second and third year courses. However, a selection of first year courses at SBE is also open to exchange students. If you want to select a second or third year course and combine it with a first year course in the same course period, you do have to keep in mind that some of your tutorials might take place at the same day and the same time. This could also happen with the exam schedule. This can never be a reason for SBE to alter the course and exam schedule.

For master's students only

If you want to take master's level courses while at SBE, you have to have a valid and relevant bachelor's degree when you start your exchange here or a statement from your home university certifying that you have obtained at least 180 ECTS in the relevant field (economics, business, marketing, etc.). Or that you will have obtained at least 180 ECTS in the relevant field at the start of your exchange semester. If you want to select a bachelor's level course and a master's level course in the same course period, you do have to keep in mind that some of your tutorials might take place at the same day and the same time. This could also happen with the exam schedule. This can never be a reason for SBE to alter the course and exam schedule.

Skills training

Focusing on the acquisition of knowledge is not sufficient if you are a student of Business and Economics. You have to be able to work in all kinds of organisations, which implies that you need to possess several social and communication skills. SBE offers you the opportunity to obtain these skills.

SBE also pays attention to quantitative skills like accounting, financial arithmetic, operations research, statistics and mathematics. Computer proficiency and basic knowledge of information science are also regarded as essential elements of the curriculum.

Course schedule

About two weeks before the beginning of each course period, your timetable will be published via Student Portal. If you notice an overlap in your timetable please contact the International Relations Office immediately via email: iro-incoming-sbe@maastrichtuniversity.nl.

Course manual

About two weeks before the beginning of each course period course manuals will be published via Student Portal. Sometimes course manuals are handed out when education starts. The course manual includes a description of the course, an overview of the objectives, the literature used, clarification of assessment criteria used and an explanation of the way the final grade will be calculated.

Course attendance and participation

You have to attend your tutorial groups and are expected to participate actively. In fact, this will have an impact on your grade for that course. The majority of SBE courses have a 100% attendance requirement which means that you cannot miss one single lecture or tutorial. If you do not fulfil these requirements, you face the consequences. One of the consequences could be that you will no longer be able to pass the course successfully and thus will not receive any credits for the course even if you ace the exam.

Results and grading system

Every course has its own requirements students need to meet in order to pass the course. These requirements are mentioned in the course manual.

All official examination results are published via Student Portal within 15 working days after the examination date.

All courses are assessed with a whole or half grade on a scale from 0.0 to 10.0 or a no grade. It should be noted that a 10.0 is very rarely scored. A grade of 5.5 is considered a pass. The grading scale applied by SBE, is to be interpreted as:

10.0	Exceptional
9.0-9.5	Excellent
8.0-8.5	Very Good
7.0-7.5	Good
6.0-6.5	Satisfactory
5.5	Sufficient
≤ 5.0	Insufficient
Pass	Sufficient to exceptional, performance at least meets the minimum criteria
Fail	Insufficient, performance below the minimum criteria
NG	No grade due to unjustified absence

Important note: most skills trainings are assessed with pass or fail and not a grade. Only the pass or fail result will be shown on the grade transcript.

SBE uses the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS). ECTS was developed by the Commission of the European Communities in order to provide common procedures to guarantee academic recognition throughout the European Community and, as from the academic year 1992/93, between an EC Member State and any country belonging to the European Free Trade Association (EFTA). ECTS provides a way of measuring and comparing learning achievements, and transferring them from one institution to another.

Suggested ECTS conversion table:

Dutch Grade	ECTS Grade	Explanation
8.5 – 10.0	= A	= Excellent
7.5 – 8.4	= B	= Very Good
7.0 – 7.4	= C	= Good
6.5 – 6.9	= D	= Satisfactory
5.5 – 6.4	= E	= Sufficient
1.0 – 5.4	= F/FX	= Insufficient

Grade transcript

Please keep in mind that once you have registered for a course it will always show up on your transcript at the end of your exchange, unless you deregister for the course before the course (de)registration deadline.

The grade transcript will contain the names of the courses you took, plus the Dutch grade and the number of ECTS credits you earned. SBE does not use ECTS grades.

An electronic version of your grade transcript will be sent directly to both you and your home university.

Immigration matters

Nationals of the following countries do not need a **long-stay visa** to study in the Netherlands: Members of the EU, EEA, Switzerland, UK, Australia, Canada, Japan, Monaco, New Zealand, South Korea, USA and Vatican City State. A long-stay visa is necessary for nationals of all other countries.

For a stay of more than three (3) months, all non-EU nationals need a **residence permit**. Please check the webpage of our Visa Office for more information: <http://www.maastrichtuniversity.nl/visa>

If applicable, Maastricht University's Visa Office will contact you regarding the visa and/or residence permit application. If you hear from them, we urge you to respond as soon as possible and to provide them with the necessary documents. After your file is complete, do know that it can take 8 weeks to process your visa application!

Students needing a long-stay visa: Without it, you are not allowed to enter the Netherlands. It is not possible to be in the Netherlands and wait for your visa there. If you miss more than one week of tutorials because of visa problems, you can no longer take part in the class.

Important note:

If your long-stay visa is not ready in time, do not apply for a short-stay visa instead. If you do so anyway, Dutch Immigration Laws will oblige us to cancel your SBE student registration and you will not be allowed to follow courses.

Nuffic Certificate – for Chinese nationals only

All Chinese nationals (even if they are currently living outside China) who wish to enrol in an English-taught programme at a Dutch higher education institution must apply for a Nuffic Certificate to be eligible for a Dutch entry visa. This does not apply to Hong Kong (SAR), Macau (SAR) or Taiwan (ROC) nationals, or to those with British National Overseas citizenship.

The Nuffic Certificate is a document issued by Nuffic (Netherlands organization for international cooperation in higher education) that confirms the validity of students' diplomas and degrees, and their English language proficiency test scores. The minimum language requirement is a TOEFL iBT (only the iBT version is accepted) score of at least 79 *or* an IELTS (academic) score of at least 6.0.

Chinese nationals who study at one of our partner institutions in Hong Kong (SAR), Macau (SAR), Taiwan (ROC) or any English-speaking country (e.g. Australia, New Zealand, United States, Canada, Singapore) where education is completely in English are exempted from the English language proficiency test. When applying for the Nuffic Certificate these students must provide a motivation letter stating that they request an exemption for the English language test because they are currently studying at a university located in Hong Kong, Taiwan, Macau or in an English speaking country. We will provide the Nuffic organization with a list of the names of the students who are eligible for the exemption.

Note that an exemption may be given only for the English language test score part of the application for a Nuffic certificate. *If you are a Chinese national you will always need a Nuffic Certificate* (in this case only proving the validity of your diplomas and degrees) as part of the application for a long-stay visa for the Netherlands.

We strongly recommend that you apply for the Nuffic Certificate at least four months prior to your intended departure for the Netherlands. Please note that the application for a Nuffic Certificate does NOT replace the visa application, or the exchange application procedures of SBE or other Dutch universities and Institutions of Higher Education.

The entire application procedure for the Nuffic Certificate can be found via: <https://www.studyinholland.nl/>

© Plan your stay © Visas and permits © Nuffic Certificate for Chinese students

Housing

Student housing in the Netherlands is not arranged by university. Finding a room is your own responsibility. In Maastricht there is a shortage of student housing. Finding a suitable place to stay can be difficult and time consuming. We advise you to start looking for an accommodation as soon as your application has been (conditionally) approved.

Although, Maastricht University cannot assist students in finding accommodation, we do want to offer you tips in your search for housing.

Maastrichthousing

Most exchange students end up staying in the UM Guesthouse (C or P building) via [Maastrichthousing](#). Maastrichthousing is affiliated with Maastricht University. The UM Guesthouse offers furnished single and double rooms and studios at 13 locations in Maastricht. The main buildings are located in the vicinity of SBE and are easily accessible by bike or on foot. Minimum stay is 3 months, maximum 12 months.

Unfortunately, we cannot guarantee that all students who apply for a room in the UM Guesthouse actually get a room there. Applications are processed on a first-come-first served basis, and we have no influence on that process.

If you want a room in the UM Guesthouse, go to [Maastrichthousing](#). To book a room you first need to register as user; registration costs are non-refundable.

If the UM Guesthouse is fully booked, or if you prefer to stay elsewhere, you can click on the option private market or housing corporations. You may also browse the internet yourself. Do note that most private landlords offer only contracts for a year. Most housing corporations mostly offer unfurnished housing.

Some students choose to live in Belgium, where accommodation may be cheaper and it is possible to commute by bike to Maastricht. However, this choice means that you will need to register yourself with the Belgian municipality, and may face additional bureaucratic steps that are not covered here. **Bear in mind that if you are a non-EU student and you have a residence permit for the Netherlands, you cannot live in Belgium or any other EU country (bordering the Netherlands).**

Legal aspects, regular and irregular housing expenses

We recommend you to acquaint yourself with the legal aspects of renting accommodation and with the regular and irregular housing expenses. That way you will know what to expect and will be able to avoid unnecessary bills or disagreements when you leave.

For more information check [MyMaastricht](#).

Avoid getting scammed

Here are some tips on avoiding scams in the Dutch rental market:

- Does the offer sound too good to be true? Then it probably is.
- Always check the address of a room that is on offer; e.g. via Google, Google Maps.
- Always check the credentials of the person offering a room; e.g. ask the person to provide a telephone number. Land line phone numbers in Maastricht start with 043 or +31-43 when the country code of the Netherlands is added. Google whether a name has been used before in a fraud scheme. Ask if you can register with the council at the address. If not, that's a red flag.
- Never trust people who claim not to be able to arrange a viewing; e.g. because they are not in the Netherlands.
- Never transfer money in advance
- Never transfer money to Western Union, PayPal accounts or to foreign accounts.

Please take the following dates into account when booking housing:

Note that you need to make sure you arrive in Maastricht at least one day before the compulsory introduction days. The last day you have to be present at our school is the last day of the exam week or skills weeks. If you want to take a resit (=second chance to pass the exam) you have to be present in Maastricht. In this case the last day you have to be present at our school is the last day of the resit week. Please consult the academic calendar for the concerning dates.

Warning:

Please note that the International Relations Office at SBE cannot and will not interfere on your behalf in case of problems, issues or even legal disputes, neither with the UM Guesthouse, Maastrichthousing, nor with housing agencies, landlords, local students subletting their room or apartment or otherwise. Instead, consult with your own lawyer or check the [Housing Helpdesk](#).

Costs of living in the Netherlands

Your daily expenses include accommodation, insurance, books and study materials, groceries, transportation, clothing and personal care, leisure, travel and other expenses. Experience has shown that students living and studying in the Netherlands spend approximately € 1.100 a month.

This estimate does not include tuition fees (you pay your normal tuition at your home university for the semester), immigration fees and unforeseen costs and should be used as a general indication of the costs of living.