



**EXPERIENCE
REPORT BERLIN**



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Experience Report Erasmus SRH Berlin (hdpk)
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Who are we?	<u>4</u>	Berlin	<u>13-14</u>
- Introduction to us	<u>4</u>	- General information	<u>13</u>
		- Things to see	<u>13</u>
Preparation	<u>5-6</u>	- Going out	<u>13-14</u>
- Documents	<u>5</u>	- Important numbers	<u>14</u>
- Visa	<u>5</u>	- Sport facilities	<u>14</u>
- Accomodation	<u>5</u>		
- Social media	<u>6</u>	Transportation	<u>15</u>
- Study timetable	<u>6</u>	- Transportation to Berlin	<u>15</u>
- How we prepared	<u>6</u>	- Transportation in Berlin	<u>15</u>
Support	<u>7</u>	Contact	<u>16</u>
- Contact persons	<u>7</u>		
- Registration/student card	<u>7</u>		
SRH University	<u>8-9</u>		
- Transportation to university	<u>8</u>		
- Education system	<u>8</u>		
- Opening hours	<u>8</u>		
- Catering facilities	<u>8</u>		
- Computer facilities	<u>8</u>		
- Library	<u>9</u>		
Classes	<u>10-11</u>		
- Study timetable	<u>10</u>		
- Fellow students	<u>10</u>		
- Possible courses	<u>10</u>		
- Our courses	<u>10-11</u>		
- Lectures	<u>11</u>		
Finances	<u>12</u>		



WHO ARE WE?

In this report, Marieke and Britt will tell more about their experiences as Erasmus students at the SRH Berlin (hdpk). They will also tell more about the preparations that need to be done, the classes and even about their own finances. But first, a brief introduction.

Introduction to us

We are Britt van Klij and Marieke van Hal. We are two bachelors students from the Netherlands. At home, we study international event management. At SRH Berlin (hdpk) we are enrolled in the creative industries management course. We studied at SRH Berlin (hdpk) during the winter semester of 2018/2019. This was our first time living abroad and even the first time visiting Berlin, and we loved every second of it. We hope this report helps you with, or during, your Erasmus period. We would definitely recommend SRH Berlin (hdpk), you will not regret it.



PREPARATION

Documents

It is determined by law that, in order to study in Berlin, every student needs to have health insurance. During the introduction, this will be thoroughly explained by SRH Berlin (hdpk) and a company that is called "BARMER". So, if you do not have health insurance, this is something you must arrange in advance.

Additionally, we arranged our Erasmus+ Scholarship in advance. We would advise you to check with your home university if you are able to get this scholarship.

Visa

Since we are both European citizens, we did not have to arrange a visa. However, if you are from a country that does not belong to the European Union, it is likely that you will have to arrange a visa. We advise you to do this on time, as this might take some time.

Accommodation

Unfortunately, it is very hard to find a place in Berlin. Therefore, we would advise starting the process of finding a place as soon as possible. These are some links that could help you with finding a place to stay:

German site for apartment sharing: <https://www.wg-gesucht.de/>

English site with furnished rooms and apartments:

<https://www.nestpick.com/search?city=berlin&page=1&order=relevance>

Privately run student housing: <https://neonwood.com/de/>

Britt: "It was really hard for me to find a place. After doing some research online, I found a place to stay. I ended up renting my own studio in an apartment complex called "Neon Wood" which is located in Mitte. This is a furnished studio with your own kitchen and bathroom. The only things you should bring are things like cutlery. I can definitely advise you to stay here."

Marieke: "I got really lucky when I was searching for an apartment. A good friend of mine was studying in Berlin the semester before me and told me about the apartment where she was living. I got really excited by the pictures and the location of the apartment so I decided to contact the owner of the apartment and asked if it was possible for me to rent the apartment for half a year after my friend. Fortunately, this was possible so the only thing that I had to do was to search for other roommates. Via a Facebook group for Dutch people living in Berlin I found two really kind girls to live with."



Social Media

We would recommend incoming Erasmus students to follow SRH Berlin (hdpk) on Facebook and Instagram. This way you will get connected with the university. You can join the "hdpk Campus" Facebook group for the latest updates about school. Additionally, you will stay up to date of upcoming school music events during your stay. This is a private group, so in order to join this group, you need to ask someone that is already in the group if they could add you.

There are also many other interesting groups on Facebook to follow. For our Erasmus stay, there was a Facebook group called "Erasmus Berlin 2018/2019". Here many people would post about interesting events, and they would help you out if you had questions. Since we are both Dutch, we also joined a Facebook group for Dutch people living in Berlin. From other students, we heard that many other nationalities have a similar group.

Study timetable

Your timetable will be made by SRH Berlin (hdpk). Before the beginning of the semester, you need to pick your courses. There is plenty to choose from, so you will definitely find something you like. Based on your chosen courses, a schedule will be made. In the beginning, we did not understand our schedule and some of the classes had an overlap. We talked to Brigitte about this and some changes were made and she explained the schedule very clearly to us.

How we prepared

Marieke: "I asked a lot of people within my network about Berlin. Almost all the people whom I have spoken with were very enthusiastic about studying a semester in Berlin. I received by far a lot of information about the city. Next to asking about Berlin within my network I also did research on the internet. I would advise the upcoming exchange students to read up about Berlin and all its interesting history. This really helps you to understand the Berlin culture and history."

Britt: "When I found out that I was going to do my Erasmus period in Berlin, I spoke to many people within my network. A lot of them already visited Berlin before, so they had many recommendations. Additionally, I did some research online. I would advise you to do the same! It is always nice to know a few things about the city. Additionally, I would also advise to watch some documentaries on Berlin as it has an interesting history, something that is still visible throughout the city."



SUPPORT

Contact persons

The contact persons at SRH Berlin (hdpk) for Erasmus students are Sebastian Rabe and Brigitte Biehl.

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Director of Studies B.A. Creative Industries Management

Sebastian and Brigitte have been very helpful during the whole exchange period. We especially talked to them during the first couple of days in order to find everything at school and understand the school systems and schedules. We have consulted multiple times about school assignments with Sebastian and Brigitte. They were always willing to help us and we could always stop by their offices if we had questions.

Registration/student card

You will receive an email from SRH Berlin (hdpk) with information about receiving a student card. SRH Berlin (hdpk) offers a student card that you can also use for public transportation everywhere in Berlin. You have to transfer 193.80 EUR to SRH Berlin (hdpk) in order to receive this card during the introduction days.



SRH UNIVERSITY

Transportation to university

We always went to school by public transportation. The university has two locations. The location we would most often use was located at the Potsdamer Strasse. This location is easy to reach as there is a U-Bahn stop located next to the school, called Kleistpark. The other location is at Ernst Reuter Platz. This one is also easily reachable as there is a U-Bahn stop one minute away, called Ernst-Reuter-Platz. Most of the trams go every 5 minutes, so if you miss one tram, there will be another one coming very soon.

Education system

At SRH Berlin (hdpk) there is a winter semester and a summer semester. The winter semester starts the first Monday of October and ends mid-February. The summer semester starts the first Monday of April and ends mid-August. We have studied at SRH Berlin (hdpk) during the winter semester. The classes are on average with 12 students. All the courses started during the first two weeks of the semester but you do not have the same courses every week. This keeps it interesting, as you do not do the same thing every week. Your schedule will change almost every week. It differentiates per course how it will be examined. It differs from papers, presentations to written exams. This will be explained by your teacher during one of the first classes. All the examinations are at the end of the semester.

Opening hours

SRH Berlin (hdpk) is opened from Monday till Friday from 9:00 till 18:00. You are always free to enter the building with your key. You will receive your key, which can open all the doors, during the introduction days.

Catering facilities

On the sixth floor of the SRH Berlin (hdpk) building are a coffee machine and a bar where you can buy food and drink. The prices of the food and drink were average prices. There is also space to sit and enjoy your meal. This place also offers a microwave, so you can warm up your own meals.

Computer facilities

On the sixth floor of the building are some computers available to use. You can log in on every computer with your login codes from SRH Berlin (hdpk), which you will receive during the introduction days. There are also two computer rooms where you can use computers when there are no classes being held. SRH Berlin (hdpk) has their own Wi-Fi which you can enter with a passcode. You will receive this during the introduction days. In case you forget it, there are posters hanging throughout the building with the code on it. SRH Berlin (hdpk) offers unlimited printing facilities. You need to use your key in order to print at SRH Berlin (hdpk). You can put money on the key and print for 5 cents per paper.



Library

The library at SRH Berlin (hdpk) is opened from Monday - Thursday 10:00 - 12:00h and 13:00 - 16:00h, Wednesday 10:00 - 18:00h. You can find a lot of interesting books related to all the studies at SRH Berlin (hdpk) and rent them for free with your student card.

CLASSES

Study timetable

As an Erasmus student, you will have the chance to pick the courses you would like to do. There is a big list with multiple courses to choose from. This list, together with a detailed explanation of the courses, will be provided to you by SRH Berlin (hdpk). Since you will be able to pick your own courses, there is not one timetable for all students. Eventually, we only had class on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays. On Monday we had class from 2 pm until 6 pm. On Tuesdays, the times varied. Sometimes we would visit a company from 9 am until 1 pm, or we would have two different classes per day and we would be at school from 9 am until 7 pm. However, most of the times we would have one class and we would be at school from 9 am until 2 pm. On Thursdays, we had class from 9 pm until 2 pm. Even though the classes are long, there is a fifteen-minute break every 90 minutes. This helps with getting back your concentration.

As you can see, we had many free hours. In the beginning, we did not need those hours, since we did not have a lot of homework and the deadlines were far away. This was really nice as it helped to get used to a new school, city, and classmates. Eventually, we did need those hours in order to reach the deadlines.

Fellow students

All the students were roughly around the same age as we were. Some people were a bit older and others were a bit younger. However, this was not really noticeable. It was easy to make contact with the other students as they were really friendly and eager to get to know us. Something that helped a lot was the fact that we were not the only foreigners. There are so many different nationalities at SRH Berlin (hdpk) and this definitely helped us to feel welcome.

Possible courses

As mentioned before, every Erasmus student is able to pick their own courses from a big list provided by SRH Berlin (hdpk). There were not any mandatory courses, so you are free to choose whatever you would like to. However, it is important to keep in mind that the chosen courses need to be approved by your home university and by HDPK. There is a big variety of courses, so you will be able to pick something you would like. All the courses are extremely interesting and you will definitely learn something from it.

Our courses

We decided to pick the following courses: “Public Relations”, “Leadership and Organisation”, “Arts Market, Museums and Galleries”, “Creative Business Start-Up-Lab” and “Digital Communication Management”. These courses are all taught in English at a suitable level for Erasmus students, as well as the “regular” students. All the courses began in the first week of school, except for “Arts Market, Museums



and Galleries” and “Creative Business Start-Up-Lab” these courses began a couple of weeks later. All courses end when the semester is finished, which will be mid-February. Many lectures will provide you with printed out literature. However, there was one time we needed to buy a book. Luckily this book was available in the library, so we did not have to buy this book. All the classes are a mixture of lectures, seminars, and workshops. This mixture is really nice as there is a lot of variety in class and you will not get bored. What also helps is that there is enough room for discussion and feedback. This keeps every class interesting. Additionally, many lectures are open to change a class if students would like to get more knowledge on a specific topic. For some classes, we would also do company visits. These were really interesting as you could see how the creative industry works in real life. During these visits, we would usually get a short presentation by an employee of the company. After that, there was plenty of time to ask questions.

Lecturers

For every class, we would have different lectures. All of the lectures were extremely open for ideas from the students. They were easily reachable, usually by email. Additionally, they were always willing to help with your project. All the lectures would prefer to be called by their first name, this makes them easily approachable. They were also always open for a quick chat about your weekend or any other topics. This definitely helped us with feeling welcome.



FINANCES

We both roughly spend around 5500 EUR during our stay. The average per month would be around 1100 EUR, as we stayed for a little over four months. This includes rent, groceries and going out.

The prices of goods are roughly the same prices as everywhere in western Europe. Therefore, we would not necessarily advise you to take any goods from home. However, it is nice to bring some typical goods from your own country, since it is hard to get those around here. The cheapest place to do your groceries is at Lidl, here the prices are lower than in Rewe for example. Rewe is a more expensive supermarket, however, it does have more to offer.

We both did not open a bank account, because our Dutch bank account worked perfectly fine. Most of the places, however, do not accept cards, so you should always have cash on you. If a place does accept cards, then it is safe to say that they accept all kinds of credit and debit cards.

We both did not have any preparatory costs as we did not have to get another insurance or take any test. On-site we used our public transportation card that we received from SRH Berlin (hdpk). We once paid an amount of 193.80 EUR in order to use the card during our stay. This card can be used everywhere in Berlin. Since all of our travelings was in Berlin, we did not have any other transportation costs. We also paid 95 EUR for the introduction days.

Britt: "My biggest expense was my rent. That was 675 EUR per month for rent. Unfortunately, I could only rent my studio for half a year, even though I would stay in Berlin for a little over four months. Therefore I needed to pay extra rent. This included everything. I did, however, have my own kitchen and bathroom and many other benefits."

Marieke: "I paid 585 EUR per month, which included everything. I did share my apartment with two other girls."

We did not have to buy any other study materials than what we would normally use in the Netherlands. For groceries, we both spend about 100 EUR per months. Going out was a bit more expensive, as you usually need to pay 15 EUR entrance. The prices for a beer or another drink were the same as in The Netherlands. We estimated that we would both spend around 120 EUR each month on going out.



BERLIN

General information

Berlin is the capital of Germany, ever since 1990 following German reunification, and has a population of 3.5M people. Berlin has a very interesting history as the city used to be divided into two parts, of which a democratic western part formed an exclave within the Eastern bloc at the time of the Cold War. Since the fall of the Wall, the city has only become more interesting. On the one hand, there is the past, of which a number of elements are still visible in the city, on the other hand a city has been developed that has not survived a normal pattern of growth from one center during an important post-war period, but a city that originates from separate areas that are enormous. What is actually a must-do is to deepen well in the history of the city beforehand. This will help you to understand why things are in Berlin as they are. You can see by all the large number of museums, art expositions, festivals, and other events in the cultural heart of Germany. Furthermore, Berlin is clean, relatively safe and people are hospitable.

Things to see

There are a lot of sights that you have to see. Below a list of a few things that you definitely must see.

- Brandenburger Tor
- Siegesaulle tower
- Checkpoint Charlie
- Eastside gallery
- Holocaust memorial
- The Berliner Dom
- Potsdamer Platz
- Fernsehturn
- Slot Charlottenburg
- Reichstag

Going out

Berlin is the perfect place to go out. It has many fun clubs, bars, and delicious restaurants. Below a list with some bars, clubs, and restaurants that we would recommend.

Bars

- Friedrichshain is a really nice neighborhood with lots of nice bars.
- RAW Gelände is a big street with many nice bars and good music.
- Klunkerkränich is a really nice rooftop bar with a beautiful view of Berlin.
- Sage beach is the perfect place to have some beers in the sun.
- Monkeybar is a nice rooftop bar.
- Simon Dach Strasse is a nice street with many fun bars.

Clubs

- Kater Blau
- Salon Zur Wilden Renate
- Tresor
- Berghain
- Sisyphos
- Ritter butzke
- Griesmuehle
- About blank
- Suss war gestern



Restaurants

- Burgermeister
- Yosoy
- Cowei
- The flying monkey
- Markthalle Neun
- Snackbar curry 36

Important numbers

Police: 110

Ambulance: 112

On-call doctor service: 030 310031

SRH Berlin (hdpk): 030 233206610

Sports facilities

You can find a lot of different sports facilities in Berlin. We would recommend you to google for the kind of sport you are interested in. You can find many different sports facilities online and from there you can choose the one you want. Marieke went to the gym in Berlin, the gym was called fitness first and she would definitely recommend this gym. Britt's apartment complex had another apartment complex which offered a free gym for all its residents.



TRANSPORTATION

Transportation to Berlin

Marieke: "Since Berlin is not very far from the Netherlands I would recommend going by car. My parents brought me by car so I could easily bring all my stuff to Berlin. If you do not have the possibility to go by car you can go by plane, bus or train. If you book on time flights and train tickets are not very expensive. Flix busses are always really cheap and you can bring a lot of luggage."

Britt: "My parents brought me to Berlin by car, so I could easily bring all my stuff. Additionally, it was nice to spend some time with my parents in Berlin. However, if it is not possible to go to Berlin by car, I too would recommend going by plane, train or bus. As Marieke said, if you book on time, it is not expensive."

Transportation in Berlin

The public transport in Berlin is perfectly arranged. The public transport in Berlin is going 24 hours a day and most of the trams departure every five minutes. We both used the app VBB. This app tells you which transport you need to take in order to get to your destination. You can say from which point you want to departure and where you want to go. The app will tell you what time your bus or train is leaving. SRH Berlin (hdpk) offers a limitless public transport card for 193.80 EUR, for your entire stay. You can use this card to go everywhere in Berlin. If you have to the possibility to bring or buy a bike, we would definitely recommend doing so.

CONTACT

If you have any questions, you can always contact Sebastian Rabe or Brigitte Biehl.

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 not forget to follow SRH Berlin (hdpk) on the social media accounts:
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