

Preparation

The application process was extremely simple. Any trouble I encountered was quickly solved by Aleksandra & Torsten. At my exchange university they were very accommodating to incoming students providing us with a folder with specific instructions on what would need to be done, deadlines, locations etc. The Department of Economics held a welcome day for all international students at the beginning of our semester and we met all the relevant people in charge of the Erasmus students in our department. Therefore, when I encountered any problems I was able to contact the relevant people easily.

As a previous tutor for Interstudis at Viadrina, I was terribly disappointed with the tutor system at Padova. My tutor contacted me before I arrived, but when I arrived and required assistance he told me that he was too busy. He kept arranging meeting times and places and then cancelled. After that I did not hear from him ever again. I had to rely on Padova students who had come to Viadrina on exchange before for help.

Accommodation

Accommodation was relatively easy to find through Facebook groups. I would advise to stay closer to the city centre. My flat was close to the university but far from the city centre. Since the Economics faculty is on the edge of the central zone, it's better to find a room in the central zone because it gives you flexibility to travel to the city centre as well as the university and train station. I would not advise taking the university accommodation as it is close to the university but far from the city centre. I made the same mistake of taking a private flat near the university accommodation. Rent for a single room should be between 200-250 Euros including expenses. Renting double rooms are quite popular in Italy and a double should cost between 150-200 Euros including expenses.

Studying at the university abroad

The University of Padova was ranked as the best university overall in Italy as well as the best Economics university in Italy. It is also the fifth oldest university in the world and to study at such a beautiful and old university was a great experience. Attendance at lectures were not mandatory but advised. For Bachelor Wiwi students going to Padova be careful as Padova operates on a Trimester system and not a semester system. So for example arriving in Sommersemester is in between 2nd and 3rd trimester so while you are able to take courses from 1st and 2nd trimester, you won't be able to attend the lectures. In 3rd trimester most of the courses are designed for Erasmus students but with my specialisations at Viadrina I had to select a course from the previous trimester which meant I had to study the content by myself. Padova does allow you to take exams in 3 different sessions which helps enormously though.

The course structures were completely different from Viadrina. It was more theory based and there were no tutorials so it was difficult to prepare for exams as we had no guidance as to how the exam would be structured, we just had to study everything the professor provided.

The university looked after international students very well and the overall organization and course content was very challenging but very rewarding. Overall I learnt a lot and it did feel like I was attending Italy's best university.

Day to Day Life and Free Time

Padova is a small university town so at night it's very quiet compared to bigger cities with a few places which students visit regularly. Rent is cheaper than bigger cities, about 350 Euros a month including expenses is the average price for a single room while a double room is much cheaper. Padova has no metro so it relies heavily on buses and trams. As it is a very old city, the buses don't cover all the areas and the city requires a lot of walking. This is why most students choose to purchase a bicycle and cycle around the city. A bike is essential in Padova and bikes are easy and cheap to purchase all over the city. Cost of living however is quite high in Padova compared to other cities in Italy as the region of Veneto is the wealthiest in Italy. Venice is only 20 minutes away by train, so a lot of my free time was spent exploring the city. Padova is also extremely well connected with regular Flixbus and train services to most major cities at a very good price.

Conclusion

The best experience for me was being able to study at such a famous and ancient university as well as the best university ranked in Italy. As it was very close to Venice, I had the opportunity to get to know Venice extremely well, an opportunity I don't think I would ever have thought I'd have. Padova is also extremely well connected to most major cities in Italy. The university is very well organized and is very helpful to Erasmus students.

The worst experience was the fact that going in Summersemester means you are in between second and third trimesters in Padova's bachelor economics department, and as most English courses are taught in 2nd trimester and

only a few in 3rd trimester, you might have to do some exams without attending lessons. Also the lack of practice tutorials made learning for exams a bit difficult.