

# The international internship in Amsterdam



What brings you to Netherlands and do you speak Dutch?"

## **Introduction**

### **Why Netherlands?**

I was asked this question several times over the course of my internship.

But looking back, how did I actually come up with the idea, to do my international internship in Amsterdam? Because of the many questions, I became natural and made me reconsider what led me to that decision. This actually had different reasons: the main reason is the facility at AMOLF is exactly what I wanted to study the dynamical behavior of my sample (All-trans-retinal). The second main reason is that the AMOLF is one of the oldest research centers and I quickly realized that it will be a good addition in my CV. Also being an international student in Germany I never had a chance to visit Netherlands and explore it, so it was a best opportunity for me to have the experience of living there. The AMOLF has the best setup for anisotropy measures so why not even sniff at the direct neighbors?

In my opinion Experience abroad, is not only for the CV but also super important for your own personality development and valuable - "think outside the box". The international internship is of course offers a great opportunity for this experience. So all in all enough reasons for me to go to Netherlands, now the question is why Amsterdam? Amsterdam is very expansive and crowded also but it offers great opportunities to explore old history of the country and has a wide range of different art museums. But the major draw back I had to face was accommodation problem, I was looking for different options but what it made is very difficult is my limited budget. The accommodation was very expensive, and I was unable to secure any cheap option for me, I asked the AMOLF HR and they arranged one apartment for me but the monthly rent of the apartment was equal to my total funding money. And it made very difficult for me to survive for second month.

Now the question is, language barrier? Being an international student, I am already facing this language barrier here in Germany but trying to overcome it with learning German language, but Amsterdam surprised me, its more international and people are okay to communicate in English.

## **Experience at AMOLF**

Shortly before I finally started my internship in Amsterdam, I was suddenly I was suddenly very unsure whether this was going to be a good decision? This was due to various points. For one, probably the fact that I have not had many positive results so far during my experiments during the home internships and at some point I wasn't sure how I was going to survive 2 months of internship. But I had to boost my energy and started my experiments, it turned out pretty quickly that my concern was totally unfounded and the internship in Amsterdam Netherlands was probably the best. I got some good results from experiment which boosted my energy and then I performed experiments on other facility as well. In addition, everyone met me so positively.

Furthermore, my internship was also very complicated in terms of sample handling. I had faced some issues in their setup but it was resolved with different sample holder. As my stay was pretty short, I didn't had much opportunities to rotate through different departments or to explore the city.

A small disadvantage of the AMOLF was perhaps that, it's a research organization with lots of PhD students walking around but only few master/internship students. Which ultimately, shrink the opportunities to socialize but it give me the opportunity to learn the working behavior of a PhD student as my goal is also to do a PhD. It was also unfortunate that you were there as an international student does not receive access to student discount on food and public transportation. So, the stay in Amsterdam turned out to be a bit expensive. It was the experience still totally worth it! As a final point, however, it remains to be said that the AMOLF is a very modern research organization and one of the oldest research organizations in Europe.

## **Organization**

I only made the decision to do the internship in Amsterdam at relatively short notice, so about 3 months before the start I contacted them [REDACTED] group. I proposed my idea to [REDACTED] which he liked and offered me an internship in his group. It took a while to finalize the documents at AMOLF but other than that everything went very smoothly.

In addition - which I highly recommend and for which I was very grateful - I made an effort about the Erasmus grant. This relieved me financially. Since I was in

Netherlands only for two months so I didn't have to do a lot of bureaucracy which saved my time. It was prerequisite for my scholarship was taking out international health insurance, accident insurance and liability insurance.

## **Living in Holland**

Unfortunately, I quickly realized that it wasn't going to be that easy would find a room in Amsterdam. At the beginning of the internship AMOLF housing offered me a room in Amsterdam. This overflowed Facebook where I placed a wanted ad in the Amsterdam Wonen group. In addition, I had to pay for the Dutch website "Kamernet" (the Dutch "WG wanted") registered, but unfortunately nothing about that found because they have a very long waiting list and wait time is around 6 months, so in my opinion one should plan early. The room I ended up moving into was in DUWO apartments at the Carolina MacGillavrylaan a student residential complex in Amsterdam. The building was okay not very nice but the rent of the apartment was 1040€ per month. In addition, only 5 minutes on foot from AMOLF and 20 minutes away from the city center on train.

But what is fundamentally interesting about living in Netherlands:

- Almost everything can be paid with a card, cash isn't that big here anymore.
- Housing is relatively more expensive.
- You MUST have a bike and a good lock, as well as a rain jacket and rain trousers; but be careful: cycling in Amsterdam is very challenging.
- "Fietsinstallingen" - bicycle storage facilities are everywhere! At the Train station, for example, also from the OV - there you can park for 24 hours free of charge.
- Knowing Dutch takes you a lot further, even if the Dutch do speak English very well of course.
- Overall, I found living in the Netherlands really super comfortable and had a great time!



My house in Amsterdam



View outside of my window

### **Dutch:**

Basically, I can recommend it to anyone who wants to go to Netherlands for an internship recommend taking a language course beforehand. In general one can survive with English in Netherlands but when it comes to go to hospital then of course primarily spoken Dutch and I had very difficulties as I have zero knowledge of Dutch. I thought it was nice that you could take the language course before the internship, so that you will feel comfortable.

### **Conclusion:**

All in all, I would do it again but with some knowledge of Dutch and recommend it to anyone who considering going abroad. Defiantly do that no matter where and how far away, the main thing is that you are drawn there, and you have one personal interest in the country and the culture - you can take it with you from anywhere.





The famous tilted buildings