

A Touch of the Netherlands - Exchange Student in Psychology



First of all, I would like to introduce myself. My name is Martina Maris, 23 years old, and an exchange student from the University of Groningen in The Netherlands. During the spring semester, I will be part of the graduate program of psychology. In 2005, I started studying at the University of Groningen, and I completed an undergraduate and graduate program in clinical and developmental psychology.

These programs focus on behavioral and developmental problems of youth and includes several interventions to help parents and children to overcome their problems. During my academic career, my interest in research has grown, and I have become especially interested in research methods, something I seemed to shy away from in psychology. I really grew to enjoy my classes in statistics and research methods. After I graduated in 2009, I wanted to broaden my knowledge about statistical techniques and gain more experience in conducting research. Hence, I started the research master's program in behavioural and social sciences with a specialization in psychometrics and statistics. This research program offers a wide variety of statistical classes as matrix algebra, SEM, probability theory, multilevel modelling, IRT, repeated measures, and other topics. Moreover, there are many research

It has always been a dream for me to study abroad in the U.S. My interest in coming to NAU began after I took notice of the exchange program between NAU and the University of Groningen and spoke with previous exchange students at NAU. I am very pleased to now have the opportunity to participate in this exchange program.

During the semester at NAU, I'd like to not only experience how research and course work in psychology is conducted in the U.S., but also learn about cultural differences between the U.S. and the Netherlands. I'm looking forward to working with Dr. Heidi Wayment on some research projects that will help me meet my goals of conducting research with American students but also have an opportunity to apply my interest in multivariate statistical techniques. I'm looking forward to taking two statistical courses, multivariate statistics and categorical data analysis to broaden my statistical knowledge. I am curious about the content of these classes, as well as the way these classes are being taught. So far, I already have experienced some differences regarding the structure of classes. The high number of assignments, the obligatory homework exercises, and the class participation are uncommon features of graduate classes in the Netherlands. In the Netherlands, classes are not mandatory and there is no obligatory homework exercises. It is all about the final exam, which counts for 100 percent of the final grade. I have also noticed some differences regarding research projects, especially with respect to the IRB process prior to conducting research. The policies and rules for conducting research are much more elaborate compared to the Dutch ones. Although I have already finished my bachelors and master's thesis in the Netherlands, I have never filled out an IRB form. However, in my opinion, IRBs are very helpful and a good procedure to protect the privacy of people and to treat data confidentially.

I am excited to study at NAU, to do research with Dr. Wayment and to experience the American student life. I am very pleased that I got this opportunity, and I am pretty sure that this experience will be unforgettable. I look forward to meeting NAU students and hope that I can be helpful to any graduate student who may be interested in going to school in the Netherlands! Please don't hesitate to contact (amm698@nau.edu) me if you would like to know more about the University of Groningen and the wide variety of study opportunities.