

What it's really like to live and study as a student of Leiden University's Adv LLM Program in International Tax Law

You can take my word for it: it's not going to be as terrible and stressful as any alumni will tell you. It is worse! Then again, you will love, never regret, and once it's over miss every moment of it. After all, it is the best LLM in International Taxation program on the planet. In my opinion, here is why...

Leiden may be famous for its almshouses, Venice-like canals, centuries old buildings, museums and glorious history or perhaps because Rembrandt and the Dutch Constitution were born here or maybe because Einstein lived and studied here and Oxford (England) made it its twin city but what I enjoyed the most about it is its relatively small dimensions and population, which makes it the perfect student city, its vibrant cultural and shopping activity, its close proximity to Schipol airport, Amsterdam and the Hague and the fact that your biggest worry ever is your bicycle getting a flat tire!

The truly international nature of the Advanced LLM Program in International Tax Law offered by the Leiden University, the excellence and eminence of the faculty, and the small classroom setting were what first attracted me to the program. The more I researched it, the stronger my admiration and fascination became. However, it was not until I joined that I understood why almost every alumni of the program with whom I have worked or heard speak has always impressed me so greatly. The subjects covered in class are extremely interesting and actual with a carefully crafted balance between theory and practice. All lectures are held by eminent professors and top-notch practitioners whose achievements are renown throughout the international tax arena. Furthermore, the primary focus of the lectures is designed on instilling a strong foundation of international tax law aspects. Not surprisingly, the reasoning constructs developed during the lectures remain deeply ingrained in one's mind. Last but not least, the classroom of less than 40 students representing approximately 30 countries around the world, each of us with a different background but a common goal, makes the learning environment that much more dynamic and stimulating. People do not compete with each other they really compete with themselves. In particular, I found most stimulating the constant comparison of the various tax systems in Europe, US and Asia; infused with real-life examples and issues, from the perspective of tax authorities, tax consultants, companies' representatives and academics the lectures never presented the view point of only one country or stakeholder.

In short, it is the teaching approach coupled with the truly international nature of the program, as well as the variety and dynamic of the classroom that makes this program so special for me. The program, faculty and teaching assistants offer so much more than a simple academic challenge. I was given the opportunity to truly connect with very talented and diverse colleagues and learn sophisticated international tax issues in a friendly, interactive and stimulating learning environment, while forming enduring friendships with my classmates.

I will never regret choosing the program offered by Leiden University over similar programs in Belgium, Vienna, London and NY. It has been the most rewarding learning experience I have ever had. There is no doubt in my mind that twelve intense months of in-depth learning as a student of the ITC LLM program will broaden my perspective beyond the views I have been exposed to through client related work and will serve as a springboard to further my career.