

Dual Degree Experience Report

Maastricht School of Business and Economics – Nova SBE (Lisbon)

Degree awarded at Nova SBE: MSc's in Management

Degree awarded at Maastricht: MSc's in International Business (specialization in Organization)

Before starting the Dual Degree, I studied Management at the University of Fribourg in Switzerland. I wanted more than just another degree—I wanted to challenge myself in an international context, step out of my comfort zone, and grow in every direction, both academically and personally. The application process started with Maastricht University. After passing the GMAT and going through an online interview with both universities, I was accepted. That's when the real journey began: figuring out the logistics, preparing for the move, and mentally bracing for two very different academic systems.

I chose this Dual Degree because it offered what I was looking for: two strong academic institutions, two countries, and two very different lifestyles. Nova and Maastricht complement each other in fascinating ways, and I was excited to experience both—sunny surf culture on the Atlantic coast, and structured academic life in the heart of Europe. That contrast was part of the appeal.

Both schools push you to collaborate, think critically, and learn through doing. Group work was constant, and always with people from diverse cultural and academic backgrounds—which really opened my mind and sharpened my teamwork skills. At Nova SBE, the teaching style was structured and professional, with a strong emphasis on practical business application. The Carcavelos campus is bright, modern, and literally steps from the beach. I still remember how surreal it felt to have surf lockers on the campus. At Maastricht, the Problem-Based Learning (PBL) method took some adapting. It's intense at first—there's a lot of reading and preparation—but once I found my pace and strategy, I grew to appreciate it. You learn to manage your own learning, and you become incredibly independent. I also had the chance to work at a startup in Maastricht, which gave real context to everything I was learning in class. I didn't have much influence over which courses I took, and sometimes it felt like I was just following a pre-set path. But ultimately, that's part of the trade-off: you accept a bit less choice in exchange for a broader, dual-institution experience. At Nova, I opted to take all my courses at the advanced level, building on my existing background in Management to challenge myself further. When it came to the thesis, my main supervisor was from Maastricht, but I also had valuable input from my Nova advisor. That dual perspective was enriching—but coordinating expectations between two universities wasn't always simple. Each school has slightly different academic goals, so seeking support early and communicating clearly made all the difference.

Housing was, frankly, the most difficult and unpredictable part of the entire programme. In Lisbon, I moved into a dirty apartment and decided to leave after just ten days. It was stressful—but it led me to a much better place with two amazing roommates who became close friends. I chose to live closer to the city, thinking it would offer more balance, but I ended up

bonding most with people who lived in Carcavelos. There's no right or wrong choice—friendships form where you least expect them. In Maastricht, things didn't go smoothly either. My original accommodation fell through just two weeks before I moved in. I scrambled to find something and luckily landed in Wyck, a lovely neighbourhood that turned out to be perfect. Sometimes, those last-minute changes end up being blessings in disguise. One of the highlights in Maastricht was the university's sports facilities. They're well-organized, super accessible, and affordable. Whether it's fitness, group classes, or just playing sports with friends—it was easy to stay active and healthy.

One of the key things I learned during this programme is that you must take initiative. Whether it's about sorting out housing, managing admin paperwork, or planning your thesis—you're in the driver's seat. Both universities offer support—career services, thesis coaching, academic advisors—but no one hands you a roadmap. You must be curious, ask questions, knock on doors (sometimes more than once), and stay on top of things. It's part of the learning process and part of what makes you grow.

In Lisbon, life felt like a balance between academia and enjoying every bit of sun, surf, and culture. I speak Portuguese, which helped me connect more deeply with locals and daily life. I would go surfing, try new cafés, take weekend trips—it is the kind of place that makes you fall in love with just living. In Maastricht, I embraced the student lifestyle fully. Biking everywhere—even in the rain—became routine. I went to local events, explored the Netherlands by train, and built strong friendships in and out of class. The city has its own cozy charm and a vibrant international student vibe.

Portugal taught me how to slow down, enjoy life, and appreciate spontaneity. The Netherlands taught me how to organize and focus. The contrast was striking—but that's exactly what made the programme so valuable. You grow by stretching yourself between two very different ways of living and learning. That's something no single university can offer.

And of course—two graduations. Celebrating this journey not once but twice, in two beautiful countries, was the perfect ending to an unforgettable experience. You don't just walk away with two diplomas—you walk away changed. Upon completing this Dual Degree, I embarked on my professional journey in Switzerland, first with UBS and then Bain & Company in Zurich, before returning to my hometown to pursue a PhD. I feel ready to take on new challenges confident that I can adapt, connect, and thrive wherever I go. This year and a half gave me more than academic knowledge—it gave me stories, friends, and a global outlook I'll carry with me forever.

Graduation Day in Lisbon



Graduation Day in Maastricht

