

Research Abroad at a Top European Research University



The banner features the EuroScholars logo on the left, which includes a stylized 'E' with red, brown, and blue squares. To the right, the text reads 'UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH with the EuroScholars Program'. Below this, it says 'STUDY IN EUROPE' followed by '9 TOP RESEARCH UNIVERSITIES IN 6 COUNTRIES'. The bottom left corner has the 'with isa' logo. The right side of the banner shows a top-down view of three students sitting on a wooden bench, working on laptops and books.

In This Edition:

[Alumna Ramya Gurunathan wins prestigious scholarship](#)

[University in the spotlight: KU Leuven](#)

[From our EuroScholars alumna](#)

[Upcoming conferences 2016](#)

EuroScholars alumna Ramya Gurunathan (Fall 2015, Leiden University/Pennsylvania State University) wins prestigious Churchill Scholarship

Ramya participated in the EuroScholars Program at Leiden University during the Fall 2015 semester under the supervision of [Prof. Dr. Jan Aarts](#) at the [Faculty of Sciences, Leiden Institute of Physics](#) department. Ramya participated in the research project "Induction of Superconductivity in ferromagnets".

Penn State senior Ramya Gurunathan has been selected to receive a prestigious Churchill Scholarship, a highly sought-after program that allows American college students to pursue graduate studies in engineering, mathematics, or the sciences at the University of Cambridge. Gurunathan is only the second Penn State student to win the Churchill Scholarship since its inception in 1963. [Read more here!](#)

University in the spotlight: KU Leuven



Situated in Belgium, in the heart of Western Europe, [KU Leuven](#) has been a center of learning for nearly six centuries. Today, it is Belgium's largest university and, founded in 1425, one of the oldest and most renowned universities in Europe.

KU Leuven is located in Flanders, the Dutch-speaking northern part of Belgium, a small but dynamic country in northwestern Europe. Bordering countries are the Netherlands, France, Germany, and Luxemburg, and, across the Channel, the United Kingdom.

Since its founding, KU Leuven has been based in the city that shares its name. Leuven is the capital of the province of the Flemish Brabant and is a pleasant, safe and bustling student town, where centuries-rich history meets cutting-edge science.

KU Leuven offers degree programs in 11 Belgian cities.



Through the ages, the university's academic fame has attracted numerous scholars and scientists who have made valuable contributions to European culture: Desiderius Erasmus, Justus Lipsius, and the father of modern anatomy, Andreas Vesalius, are only a few examples.



The University of Leuven can look back on a glorious past, but it also moves with the times. Today, [international co-operation](#) is regarded as essential for a modern university. Top-level [research](#) is judged according to international standards and implies interaction, co-operation, and exchange, both of researchers and results. As such, European surveys rank KU Leuven among the top ten European universities in terms of its scholarly output. Likewise with regard to teaching, KU Leuven can easily compete with internationally respected institutions in a large number of fields. The university's educational concept is modern, with research activities focused on the needs and aspirations of contemporary people and society. Against this background, it should come as no surprise that nowadays over fifteen percent of the

university's student population are international students from all over the world.



Facts and figures

More than 56,000 students (40,000 in Leuven) More than 9,152 international students
Over 150 nationalities
More than 11,000 staff members

79 Bachelor's programs
203 Master's programs
48 advanced Master's programs

41,111 SCIE publications
680,122 SCIE citations
105 spin-off companies
81 ERC projects and 10 ERC grants

About 210,000 Alumni

KU Leuven consistently performs well in the international rankings. It is currently ranked 35th in the Times Higher Education World Rankings (2015-2016) and 82nd in the QS World University Rankings (2015-2016).

Leading European Research University



At KU Leuven, knowledge is transferred through high quality interdisciplinary teaching. Study programs pay special attention to the integration of professional training into a broad ethical, cultural and social context of education. Students are encouraged to develop their skills to identify, formulate and solve problems. Special attention is paid to the steady evaluation of the teaching process in order to enhance the students' capacity to study independently, to provide intensive individual guidance and an adequate evaluation system, and to make sure that the teaching staff has excellent didactic qualities, making use of new teaching methods and technologies. In addition, KU Leuven concentrates on the training of young researchers, mainly within the context of their doctoral studies.



KU Leuven has a comprehensive strategic research policy, and its attractive working environment for national and international talent, and dynamic, efficient administrative framework ensure that a top position is maintained. The University aspires to a broad presence in the academic and scientific world, both in its educational activities and in its research.

The university's research activities are propelled by a steadily increasing research budget. In 2014, KU Leuven invested 426.5 million euros in research, a 2.03% increase over 2013. KU Leuven consistently secures funding from the most select competitive research funds. Numerous academic and scientific grants and awards highlight the quality of research at KU Leuven. The most significant global indicators of academic excellence can be found in figures on research output in the form of PhD dissertations, publications, and associated citations and impact factors. KU Leuven ranked among the European top in total projects and funding under the EU's large-scale Seventh Framework Programme, which started in 2007 and ended in 2013. In the new Horizon 2020 programme, too, KU Leuven boasts a top position. Our university ranks sixth

among European universities with 60 Horizon 2020 projects worth 28 million euros in total (situation in June 2015).

From our EuroScholars alumni: Stephen Sanders (Lander University/University of Geneva, Fall 2015)



My name is Stephen Sanders. I come from a small town in South Carolina, and spent my undergraduate years studying English Literature, History, Philosophy, and Religious Studies. I chose to study in Switzerland because the University of Geneva has a fantastic philosophy program—my primary motivations were altogether academic. However, I quickly fell in love with Switzerland, and was surprised by how wonderfully diverse the Swiss population is. I expected quiet alpine villages and cultural homogeneity, but encountered bustling cosmopolitan cities filled with people from all over the world. Also, I'd never known much about Swiss history before my semester abroad, but was delighted to learn about its' complex past. Though, Switzerland was just as beautiful as I imagined it would be. The mountains are breath taking!

The most memorable trip I took while studying in Switzerland is definitely the time another EuroScholar and I took a train to Zermatt to climb the Matterhorn. We trekked together past clusters of abandoned cottages; but separated when I took the wrong path, climbing above a frozen river to the top of a ridge that trailed toward the apex of the mount. There, in the quiet, crisp air with jagged ridges and sparse plants all around me, I felt like I'd stumbled upon an immemorial, sacred space. I'll never forget the calm and awe that I encountered up there. I befriended a number of locals via my host university, mostly through my research program. I met some really amazing (and brilliant!) people with whom I am still in contact. One post-doc in particular has become a mentor to me, and introduced me to her PhD supervisor. Another peer of mine has become a dear friend, and we chat on a weekly basis via Skype to check up on each other and practice logic. I also developed a strong bond with one of my apartment mates, who regularly dragged me away from my work to explore Geneva.



My research abroad indisputably set the route for my academic future. I gained invaluable research experience at a world-renowned institution, and was introduced to sub-fields that I hope to dedicate my life to (philosophy of emotion/imagination and social cognition). Moreover, the EuroScholars program prepared me for grad-school; it gave me a chance to challenge myself, and helped me establish interpersonal relationships that have already benefited me academically. Most notably, the prior mentioned post-doc introduced me to her PhD supervisor, who has since agreed to support my application to his institution, and to oversee my MA dissertation. The EuroScholars program also gave me a chance to work in close proximity with incredible scholars, who are leaders in their respective fields. I learned more from them first hand than I could ever hope to glean from texts. Finally, my time abroad reassured me that I want—and need—to pursue graduate studies.

Anyone who plans on studying in Switzerland ought to familiarize themselves with French (or German, depending upon where you plan to study). A substantial chunk of the Swiss population is fluent in English, but you'll get more out of your time there if you familiarize yourself with native languages beforehand. It's also a good idea to buy a rail pass and/or one of the various travel packages offered by the federal railways. You can ride the trains all over Europe, and ought to make the most of it. If possible, buy your tickets ahead of time and map out where you want to go a few weeks in advance. Last but not least, be prepared to manage your finances. Everything in Switzerland is incredibly expensive, and living there will deplete your savings if you aren't careful. Nonetheless, treat yourself to delicious chocolate, fondue, and local cuisine every now and again.

Finally, I recommend that other EuroScholars have fun and make time for each other. I'm a workaholic, and didn't take the time to appreciate my surroundings or hang out with my peers until the latter half of my stay, which was a mistake. We all need to take our research seriously, but make sure to take time for yourself and your friends. Go on an adventure. Give yourself a chance to relax and recharge; you'll be happier for having done so, and thus improve the overall quality of your research. The EuroScholars program can provide you with innumerable opportunities and amazing experiences that you'll cherish for the rest of your life, but only if you're willing to push yourself outside your comfort zone and take charge—so delve in headlong; take risks, and enjoy every second of your time abroad.

Upcoming conferences 2016:

NAFSA, Denver- Colorado

May 29 – June 3, 2016

http://www.nafsa.org/Attend_Events/Annual_Conference/

Some of the members of the EuroScholars Consortium will attend the NAFSA. Should you would like to schedule a meeting, please contact: Ms. Usha Mohunlol (u.c.mohunlol@sea.leidenuniv.nl) Or visit our session at NAFSA : “Undergraduate Research Abroad: Creating Global Opportunities”. Presented by: Bart Hendrickx, Bessie Guerrant, Sibdash Gosh, and Kathleen Horn. The session is scheduled on: Friday, June 3, 2016 from 9:30 – 10:30 AM

EAIE (European Association for International Education), Liverpool UK

September 13 – September 16, 2016

www.eaie.org

Some of the members of the EuroScholars Consortium will attend the EAIE. Should you like to schedule a meeting, please contact: Ms. Usha Mohunlol (u.c.mohunlol@sea.leidenuniv.nl)

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