



## ERASMUS+ STUDIES UU Report 2014-2015

Every student receiving an Erasmus+ STUDIES grant has to submit a UU report as well. Writing the UU report is one of the university's conditions to receive and keep the grant. Only after submitting this report your Erasmus+ grant will be awarded definitively.

Your report will be made available (anonymously) to UU students preparing an exchange or research period abroad. Not all of them are Dutch-speaking, therefore we prefer to receive reports **written in English**.

Please use Tab to go to the next (text) box.

family name	
first name	
student number	
e-mail address	<i>optional; only if you don't mind students preparing for study abroad contacting you directly</i> @
faculty/college	Faculty of Geosciences
level	<input type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	Joint International Master in Sustainable Development

destination city & country	Graz, Austria
name university abroad	Karl Fransens University of Graz
start date	03 / 01 / 2015 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	07 / 05 / 2015 (dd/mm/yyyy)

You are requested to write on the following topics. Text boxes will expand automatically while typing!

<b>PREPARATION</b>	
exchange application process	The application process was relatively straightforward, as the Joint Programme coordinators assist with most of the details. Getting documents signed was relatively easy, but it was important to keep the deadlines in mind when preparing everything. Osiris makes it easy to upload your forms, and student counselors and academic coordinators generally responded very quickly.
counselling & support at Utrecht University	I did not require too much counseling or support while at Utrecht. However, the front desk international coordinator was very helpful when completing the necessary documentation to go abroad.
academic preparation	Academic preparation is a difficult topic. At a Master's level, each university is very different in terms of grading requirements, work load, class style, etc. However, Utrecht University was fairly challenging for my first semester, so I felt well prepared for the following semester in Austria. While the class size and structure differed, I felt ready for the change.
language preparation	



The classes at both universities were in my native language (English), so this was not a problem for me. Furthermore, my receiving institution offered an intensive German course prior to beginning my studies to assist with speaking German in day-to-day life.

finances

Financial assistance from Erasmus was appreciated, as the expenses in Austria were slightly greater than in the Netherlands. In terms of moving across Europe, train tickets were very affordable and the overall move was not too costly.

**STUDY ABROAD PERIOD**

study programme (content and organisational issues)

There were several different courses that were available to Joint Programme Students. Some of the courses were more focussed on regional and urban development, while others were more focused on strategic sustainability management. While I entered Graz University on the R&U development track, I ended up taking classes that were primarily business and management oriented. I really liked this, as it opened up a whole different realm of sustainability to me. The Utrecht Board of Examiners was flexible when approving courses, which helped me to find courses that were relevant to me personally, rather than just track-based. The organization at Graz was excellent, I had no problems with staff or class selection.

academic quality of education activities

The academic quality of my classes in Graz was far better than I had expected (though I had little previous knowledge regarding the education system in Austria). Most of my courses had small class sized of about 8-14 students. This gave us a chance to get to know the lecturers well, and participate more actively in the classes. Furthermore, the classes were long (sometimes up to 4 hours), but less frequent. This worked well for students who wanted flexibility, and the chance to work on school projects outside of the classroom. Most of my classes were project based, with an extensive final output like a report instead of a final exam. This was a refreshing change, and I gained knowledge that was applicable to the real world.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

I didn't require too much support at Graz University. However, whenever I emailed the Erasmus coordinator and the International Studies coordinator, I received an immediate response. Everything was fine in regard to personal and academic support.

transfer of credits

I needed to take 30 ECTS. I ended up taking 30.5 ECTS, and the transfer will be the same to Utrecht. The course load seemed relatively high (as each class is usually 4-6 ECTS, though I took one course for 8 ECTS). Though I took more courses than at Utrecht, it was a good challenge and not too overbearing.

**STUDENT LIFE**

welcome & orientation programme

The Welcome Week seems long, but only lasts for a few hours each day. All necessary information was provided, in terms of health care, city registration, class enrollment, a tour of the campus, etc. Everything was very helpful and I didn't feel too lost. Staff was available to assist with all parts of the process.

accommodation

I chose my accommodation from an online Facebook site in which people post their housing options in Graz. In general, the accommodation in Graz is less expensive than in Utrecht. I ended up finding a perfect, spacious room within 5 minutes of the university. I recommend this option over student housing, as it allows you to be in control of what you want your accommodation to be like.



#### leisure & culture

Graz is a small city, but it is full of charm. It is easy to walk around everywhere in the city center, and it is truly beautiful. Graz is a student city, so you can meet plenty of people, and the average age is fairly young! Though small in size, Graz is quite a vibrant city, and it is very enjoyable to live here.

#### suggestions/tips

As mentioned before, I would look into housing options besides what is provided from the school. Friends that I met here tend to be dissatisfied with housing provided by the university, as it is small, expensive, and can be outside of the central city/ university area. Furthermore, I would definitely purchase the student discount card (OBB card) for the railway, as you can save a lot of money when traveling to nearby cities and countries!

## CONCLUSIONS

would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain

Yes! For me, studying in Graz was a really great experience. I valued the small classes, and I liked that we were able to get to know our teachers and classmates well. Furthermore, the classes that I took really were 'hands-on', so students had to think critically, and apply the information in a way that would be useful later down the road. For instance, developing business plans and completing semester-long projects was more useful to me than taking an exam on the last day of classes. The teachers at Graz all seemed very knowledgeable in their subjects, and willing to help students. Lastly, alternative class styles are available. For instance, I took an excursion to Budapest for 5 days, and completed a report based on my own observations. These unique classes make Graz really enjoyable, as you can take all sorts of different courses according to your needs and desires.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

I was very happy with my choice to study at Graz, though it was not initially my first choice university (but rather assigned to me through the Joint Programme). The city is small and cozy, but also fun to go out in. Classes are great, but make sure you stay on top of your work, as it seems to pile up at the end of the semester! Good luck!!

Save this UU report for your own records and send it as attachment to [verslagen.internationaloffice@uu.nl](mailto:verslagen.internationaloffice@uu.nl) within 30 days after finishing your study abroad period and in ANY case before the final deadline!