



Charles University Prague

2017-2018

PREPARATION
exchange application process
This process is quite simple if you just follow the steps given online. In OSIRIS I was able to give my top three universities and for my first choice, Prague, I had to write a motivation and make a financial and study plan. This does not take a lot of time and is useful because it makes you look critically at your first choice university.
counselling & support at Utrecht University
Anytime I had any questions I was able to email the exchange office of U.S.E and they were always very helpful in providing me with the answers and the documents I needed.
academic preparation
I did not have any academic preparation apart from looking and selecting the courses I would like to follow.
language preparation
I only followed English courses so I did not have any language preparation for this. I did decide to learn some Czech through Duolingo before going, this was not necessary but it was definitely nice to learn some phrases before going.
finances
The financial plan was helpful in getting a full picture. What is important to do before departure is to apply for the Erasmus grant and OV-vergoeding (If you are Dutch and have OV). Together this provided a buffer of around 300 euros per month. Moreover, in January we were able to pick up a one time academic scholarship from Charles University of 115 euros.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD
study programme (content and organisational issues)
I had to deviate from my original study plan in the end because some classes were full and because I discovered that I had filled in only master courses on the study plan. Signing up for courses was very different from in Utrecht. Czech students are able to sign up before the exchange students. Once you pick up your student card you are able to go in the system and choose the courses you want to follow, if they are full you can apply for the waiting list. I would definitely recommend doing this as students have three weeks to change their minds about courses so even if you are on the waiting list you have a big chance of getting in in the end. If you are not sure about which courses to follow you can also register for more courses and drop some within three weeks, without consequence.
academic quality of education activities
The courses varied a lot in quality and difficulty. Two of my courses were very do-able (Bachelor), one course was a bit more challenging (Master) and two other courses were very challenging for me (Master). Overall my teachers were quite good and had a good level of English.
counselling & support at receiving university abroad
The staff was very helpful and was good at replying to emails. I did not have much contact with them, only for my learning agreement at the beginning of the semester and my certificate of attendance at the end of my stay.
transfer of credits
I still have not received my transcript of grades, but all my credits should count as I checked with the Board of Examiners before departure.



STUDENT LIFE
welcome & orientation programme
The introduction day with the official welcome was quite brief. The orientation programme in the first week was nice, sadly there were limited places and thus many activities were already full. I recommend joining some activities to meet new people. Some activities also included going around Prague which was a nice way to get to know the city.
accommodation
Many friends of mine stayed in dorms, very cheap but far from the city and no private rooms. I looked for accomodation on Facebook and this was quite challenging. Many people reply on Facebook and many rooms have high commision or other fees. In the end I found a room through Facebook close to the city centre in an apartment with two Czech girls. I would recommend looking in Prague 1,2,3,4,5,6,7. As long as public transport is nearby it does not really matter where you live.
leisure & culture
Prague is a wonderful city with a lot to offer, and a lot of tourists as well. I would really recommend visiting the touristic places in the beginning so when people come over you can show them your favourite places. Also look online at Honest guide Prague (YouTube), they recommend places you may not ever come otherwise. While in the Czech Republic definitely visit Bohemian paradise if you like hiking or being in nature. It is a beautiful place that can easily be visited by train, when you buy tickets with more people there is discount and only 8 euro return. Prague has a rich culture, definitely go on one of the free tours in the city centre to enrich your knowledge.
suggestions/tips
Learn the basics of Czech and people will be much more friendly, they really appreciate you trying: Dobrý den - good day (can be used anytime of the day) Dekuji - Thank you Prosím - Please/ you're welcome Ano - Yes Ne - No Na schledanou - Good bye (This pronounciation takes some practice)

CONCLUSIONS
would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain
Definitely! The univeristy has a large variety of subjects to choose from and the ambiance of the city is amazing which makes it an even more enriching experience. I can honestly say that Prague is one of my favourite cities in the world. It is beautiful, has so much to see and experience. The public transport system is amazing which allows you to go anywhere in the city.
do you have any additional advice or comments?
- Compared to the Netherlands going out to dinner is very cheap (less than 10 for dinner and drinks), so while you are there enjoy going out for food. They have every type of restaurant you can imagine and because the beer is so cheap make the most of it. I learned to drink beer here, if you are still not a fan of beer go to a Vinoteka in Prague 3. Here wine is also cheap and really good! - Also plan lots of trips to surrounding countries, with bus and trains central Europe is very accessible.



2016-2017

PREPARATION
exchange application process
The application process was fairly easy via Osiris. All the documents were easy accesible and if something needed to be signed the communication went smoothly. One minor issue was that in Utrecht everything could be done only, but for the final application to Charles University I had to sent the documents per post. This took sometime before getting a response.
counselling & support at Utrecht University
As said before, most was clear, so I did not need much counseling, further the contact via e-mail was good.
academic preparation
An overview for courses was visible on the site of Charles University, Although I was unfamiliar with the system and it took some time to understand which courses I could follow, I wventually managed to chosse some courses that I wanted to take.
language preparation
All the courses I was planning to follow were in English, so I did not have any language preparation
finances
I still got stufi further I applied for the erasmus grant and the OV-vergoeding. Living in Prague is cheaper then it is in Utrecht, so I could manage with this money and did not need to make any other preparations.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD
study programme (content and organisational issues)
I was unable to take most of the courses I was planning on taking. International students could pick up their students cards one day later then Czech people and we had to wait in line on alphabetical order. Unfortunaly when somebody has to work until 4 in the Czech republic, they work until 4, even if there are still 50 people waiting to get their student card. A lot of international students could not enroll in courses they wanted because we simply couldn't enroll at the same time as the Czech people, so some classes were already full. Due this I was eventually forced to choose some new classes, including some master courses.
academic quality of education activities
In my experience there was a huge difference in the level of education. Some classes were really intresting and well organized, others were completly the opposite. The master courses I followed were rather hard, but the bachelor courses were good to do.
counselling & support at receiving university abroad
This was rather poorly, we had one speech of welcome and were told to pick up our students cards the next day, which was a disater as I explained before. Further we got no support or explanation over the fact that we couldn't participate in the classes we wanted
transfer of credits
I have not yet transferred my credits.

STUDENT LIFE
welcome & orientation programme



The official program was rather short. Luckily there are some unofficial erasmus organization that organize introduction activities. In Prague there are a lot of different universities, each with their individual program, the bigger unofficial organization was not tied to one university but targeted all the students, which resulted in more people, so more fun.

accommodation

There are dormitories available, I choose to find an accommodation on my own. I did not arrange anything upfront. The first week I lived in a hostel, but after 2 days I had found an apartment with 3 other international students. We did have some help from a Czech girl who herself had been an erasmus student and liked to help us out finding an apartment. But overall it is not too hard to find an accomodation.

leisure & culture

The old center of Prague is really pretty, but besides the old centre there are a lot of more places to discover in Prague. If you get tired of Prague, its location in central Europe is also ideal to visit cities as Vienna, Krakov, Budapest or Bratislava. Furthermore I went hiking a few times in the bohemiam paradise, which is a really beautiful nature area.

Most people under 30 can speak English, the older people do not speak english, this has to do with the former Sovjet Union, but it is really easy to manage living in Prague without speaking a word of Czech. Czech culture involves drinking a lot of beer, It is quite common to see people drinking beer at lunchtime, while they are working. This gives Prague also a lot of bars, espaciallt when it gets colder these always are packed and really fun.

suggestions/tips

When it is still hot, go to the riverside near the Dancing house. You can walk and sit on the docks here and in the summernights it will be filled with people and live music will be playing. An other option is riegrovy sady, which is a park on a hill, which looks out over the city and palace, which has amazing sunsets. I also would recommend the bars U sudu, Popocafe and the doggy bar (which is not the real name but that is something Czech that I can't write, but they have a living dog the size of a calf walking around so it is nicknamed the dog bar) Further make daytrips to surrounding cities or nature.

CONCLUSIONS

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

I would certainly recommend Prague, I simply had an amazing time and it truely is a great city. On the other hand, if you want to study abroad purely for academic reasons, you should consider perhaps a different location.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

2015-2016

PREPARATION

exchange application process

The application process is the same as for any other university. You can apply for a top three of universities and for your first choice you have to write a motivation letter, financial plan and study plan. Then, once you have been selected you have to submit a learning agreement and grant agreement. You can find all the steps of the procedure very clear on the internet.

counselling & support at Utrecht University



The support at Utrecht University is good. The international office is very helpful and also you can meet with the academic councillor in case of any questions.
academic preparation
No need for any academic preparation.
language preparation
My English knowledge was sufficient beforehand so I didn't have any language preparation. You have to take an online language test before you leave and if you have sufficient level than you need no further preparation.
finances
Living in Prague is on average cheaper than in Holland. For example going out for dinner is not expensive and beers are really really cheap! After a few weeks you know the cheapest places and you pay on average 1euro for half a liter beer. Also you can live on the dormitories for less than 150 euros a month. However, I decided to search for private accommodation and the prices can vary from 200 to 450 a month depending on the location and the size of the apartment. Travelling around Prague is also relatively cheap. Studentagency offers cheap busses and also the cities around Prague you can visit are on average not expensive. There is just one thing; because you think everything is so cheap you spend money easily! So in the end I did spend a lot of money;)

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD
study programme (content and organisational issues)
Before you arrive you have to submit a learning agreement with the proposed courses you want to take. In the first week you get your schedule and if you want to change/add or delete any courses due to time constraint or other reasons you have approximately one month the time to do that. In the mean time the courses start so I suggest you to subscribe for the correct courses as soon as possible. Changing courses is no problem so don't worry if you are not totally sure about the courses you want to take beforehand.
academic quality of education activities
The level of the courses is way easier than in Utrecht. I knew this beforehand and that's why I choose 75% master courses. Still, the courses were not that difficult. The courses I took offered one lecture and one seminar, both taking 1 hour 50 minutes. Neither of them were obligatory. For two of the courses I had to write a paper and do a presentation and a final exam, the other two only had written exams.
counselling & support at receiving university abroad
The staff is very helpful and they respond quickly to emails.
transfer of credits
I took three master courses and one bachelor course since the level here is a little bit lower. I don't know yet if all my credits will be transferred but the credits of the three master courses will be transferred for sure. The grading system here is different than in Utrecht so I don't know how my grades will be transferred.

STUDENT LIFE
welcome & orientation programme
In the first week before the courses start there is a voluntary introduction but I recommend to go to as much things as possible. There is a student association who organizes different events where you have to subscribe for. I would recommend to do that as soon as possible because at the time I wanted to subscribe some events where already full. It is a good opportunity to get to know a lot of people fast and to make friends.
accommodation



There are three different campuses from Charles University, I was placed in the so called 'Hostivar'. It is situated 45 minutes from the center and from the university because the building of my department (Economics) was situated in the middle of the center. Actually most of the buildings are builded around the city center and therefore not close to the dormitories. Furthermore, you have to share a small room with one person and a kitchen with more people. Therefore I decided to search for private accommodation which is really easy to find! For example the website erasmusinprague.com offers apartments all around the city center varying from 200 euros a month to 450 a month. Nice neighborhoods to live are: everywhere in Prague 1 and what is close to Prague 1, Zizkov in Prague 3 (student neighborhood), Namesti Miru in Prague 2.

leisure & culture

Prague is a really nice and beautiful city. It has beautiful architecture and a lot of history. Opera and ballet is very popular and for students really cheap (around 2 euros for medium sight) so I definitely recommend to go! Furthermore the night life is also really good. There are especially a lot of nice bars with really cheap beer. Zizkov is an area with bars on every corner. Clubs you can find around the city center. I was living in an apartment in Mustek (main metro station for the city center) so I could walk home all the time! If you don't live in the city center there are night trams every half an hour and uber is really cheap as well. Around Prague you can travel very well. It's location is really central compared to other countries. If you want to visit western cities you can go to Germany and Austria, but you also have the east European cities as Krakau, Budapest, Bratislava and more near by. Also within the Czech Republic there are a lot of beautiful places to visit. In the north close to the German border you can hike very well (Bohemian Switzerland) and in the south there is Cesky Krumlov which is a beautiful little village where you can raft and ride a horse (etc). Further nice places to go are Karloy Vary, Kutna Hora, Lom Velka Amerika, Terezin.

suggestions/tips

The dorms are really cheap and you will meet a lot of people but staying in an apartment is soo nice! Exploring the city is so easy and you get so much more feeling for the city. If you type on facebook: Flatshare Prague there will come a lot of groups and rooms will be posted all the time. Don't worry not finding something, even in the months after your arrival there will be a lot of rooms available. Furthermore if you like sports there is a park called Riegrovy Sady with a huge screen and looooots of tables where you can watch football/icehockey matches etc. My favorite spot! (Especially now with the European championship and friends from every country I'm there 24/7).

CONCLUSIONS

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

I would definitely recommend Prague to anyone! I had an amazing time, made amazing friends and visited amazing places. The university is not too difficult meaning you have enough free time (because no one wants to be on Erasmus and study the whole time!). The size of the city was perfect for me, you can reach everything very fast by metro and tram (the transport system is really well developed).

do you have any additional advice or comments?

I had a great time in Prague. Feel free to contant me about anything if you want more information/tips about Prague.