

2015-2016

faculty/college	Humanities
level	<input type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	Media and Performance Studies

PREPARATION	
exchange application process	The application process was quite clear: in Osiris is written what documents you need to upload in order to apply for a certain university. I did however not realise that first Utrecht University decide whether you're allowed to go abroad and that you write your first motivation letter for them, and that only afterwards you have to write a second motivation letter, after Utrecht University allows you to go abroad, for the other university directly. In other words: you first have to apply for an application to apply for the university abroad.
counselling & support at Utrecht University	Not too bad. They have some websites dedicated to the universities you can chose from and they gave a lecture about international exchanges. The latter was kind of unnecessary for me personally, because I have been on an international exchange before and only needed to know administration details which is a lot. Fortunately, they sent a lot of e-mails and documents for this, so I was very glad with that.
academic preparation	Hardly anything. As a master's student, I was allowed to go as long as I took master courses at the university abroad.
language preparation	This wasn't a problem as well: all classes abroad would be in English which is a normal thing for me considering that my study programme here at Utrecht is in English as well. Only had to take the Erasmus language test in English.
finances	Denmark is close by, so the plane ticket is cheap. Rent is almost the same as the rent of my studio back in the Netherlands, though I made sure that that one was sub-rented by someone else during my stay abroad, so that I did not have to pay double rent. My parents sent me an allowance every month, I worked a bit before I left and because of the Erasmus+ Grant I did not have any worries for money. Didn't even need to work during my stay in Denmark, even though it's a bit more expensive over there.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD	
study programme (content and organisational issues)	My study programme consisted of three courses: game design, introductory programming and transmedial storytelling. Honestly, I don't really have organisational issues with them. I consider them slow, but in the end, they always reply.
academic quality of education activities	While I did not have any problems with game design and transmedial storytelling (I loved those courses), I had some issues with introductory programming, because the class was such a mess. With this I mean that apparently, the main teacher was fired two months before the start of the course and because they didn't want

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to quit the course they hired someone less qualified and was not good at teaching, but he was the best they could get. I spent more time on that course than on the others, otherwise I would not have passed it, while I actually wanted to spend most of my time on game design and transmedial storytelling, because those are courses that mattered to me the most in terms of writing my thesis.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

Never really needed them except for the International Coordinator, and does a fine job.

transfer of credits

The Transcript of Records will be sent to the address without any problems. You need it to transfer your credits which you can do through the website of Utrecht University.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

This one is just fine. There was a general welcome speech to every new student and afterwards the international exchange students were taken apart. It's nice to meet them, but that also meant that I missed the chance to meet the "normal" Danish students of my programme.

accommodation

Through the ITU you can easily get accommodation and this is very nice, because it's difficult to get housing in Copenhagen in general. However, The Housing Foundation (the company that helps the ITU with accommodation) is a disaster. Their Online Booking System (Workflow) only works so-so, meaning that most of the time you will have to e-mail (or better call them) directly to make sure that your booking, payment, or other things got through. It full of (syntax) errors.

Also, they demand a lot of you, but do not inspect the rooms very well. I missed curtains, lights etc. Only got those after many e-mails and it still took them a month, while they promise you that you have this upon arrival. They also ask you to clean the common area when you leave, but upon my arrival the kitchen for instance, was filled with dead and living flies, because there was rotten food in the cabinets everywhere. First thing I did upon arrival was throwing a lot of stuff out and cleaning the whole room.

leisure & culture

Denmark's culture is a lot like the Netherlands. I consider them slower and less efficient than the Netherlands, but are generally also nicer and laid back. Copenhagen is a big city and there are many things to do, lots of events get announced through Facebook. But the ITU itself also organises many events. You can be as busy as you want.

suggestions/tips

Visit castles, they have lots of them and are really well taken care of. Sweden is also close by, 25 minutes by train and you're already in Malmö.

CONCLUSIONS

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

Personally, I only went to Denmark because of their famous IT University of Copenhagen.

As said, Denmark looks a lot like the Netherlands. So, for me it was as if I was still living in the Netherlands, but just a different city and I had to speak English. If you want to go somewhere more "exotic" then I suggest to go somewhere else, but if you like a country similar to the Netherlands, then Denmark is the right country. They have everything and you won't be in need for anything.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

Keep in mind that the Danish use the Danish Kroner instead of Euro's. Food and everything else is usually a bit more expensive, so take that into consideration.

2014-2015

PREPARATION

exchange application process

The process of applying isn't that hard. Once you've made your choice (which is the hard part, for that kind of info is everywhere and nowhere) there is plenty of information available on the website and on request to help you along. Apparently there was a guide for my studies in particular which helped a lot. I only found out about this one quite late though. It would be nice if a reference were made to the possibility of your own studies having made a guide. This year did have a quite late delivery date of the Learning Agreement, but that was all calculated, so it was all right in the end.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

The international office is pretty accessible. Mails are answered quickly enough so that's cool. What was cool in Copenhagen though was the possibility to mail a scan of a document which you needed signed. The international office there would just print, sign, scan and return it which saved a lot of traveling. That would be nice in Utrecht but overall, especially close to the deadline, the International Office was really quick with everything.

academic preparation

ITU sort of got a mythical dimension in game studies. But since Utrecht isn't bad either I felt pretty confident I didn't have to read up on things. I took a summer school on game studies right before leaving, that helped me get in the zone. But all in all, with the knowledge you gain here, ITU is pretty accessible with the courses I took.

language preparation

Didn't really need any. Danish speak English and my classes were in English. I tried to learn some Danish from some books and sites but stopped that after I figured I didn't really need it and that the Danish language isn't particularly pretty.

finances

The Erasmus grant explanation was plenty, that was nice. But overall I found it hard to guess how much money I needed. In the end I took 3 jobs to create a huge buffer, for Denmark is expensive. This was necessary however to cope with unforeseen circumstances and just maintain myself.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)

Since the courses I took were the courses that started a master, I was on the same foot as all the other students. The joy of these courses is that they strive to get everyone along, whether you focus on design or analysis. This ensured that I could join in even with things I wasn't familiar with. Still, I do think it's more etched to designers though, based on the amount of design elements they took for granted. They were happy to explain though, so no problem.

academic quality of education activities

I was expecting it to be higher frankly. This was ITU, the cusp of game studies, and they didn't really have that high demands. This coincides with this 'getting everyone along' attitude but it was a bit of a letdown for its

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reputation. Also, I was a bit out of my game for one course I followed was Game Design. This involved way more practical actions than I'm used to, which felt slightly unacademic to me. But in the end such skills are just as relevant, so I altered my opinion.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

A lot happened by email, which was consequently and quickly answered usually. The availability of in person conversations was a bit less, but I didn't need it that often. The professors were very supportive as well, on request.

transfer of credits

I didn't have to do anything! Which is awesome, but also a bit unnerving. Apparently they have all the data needed to directly communicate with Utrecht.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

I sort of missed it for there was some overlap with my summer school. I heard it was really nice though.

accommodation

The accommodation was provided for and of high quality. Expensive as well though, and I didn't really have any other options, which was constricting. Another problem was the availability of the keys. Picking up of keys could only be done on Monday, Wednesday and Friday between 8 and 10 AM. Most people however arrive in the weekend so if you don't know anyone there, you can't enter your room yet....

In the end it turned out OK, but it was a hassle.

leisure & culture

Copenhagen is a lot like the Netherlands. Bikes everywhere, rain and flat. The minute differences though are what make it interesting. Furthermore, the city itself is picturesque with a lot of different styles. There's enough to see there but not enough to last half a year. At a certain point you've seen the city and its activities. Luckily the university provided lots of game nights and entertainment.

suggestions/tips

What would be totally awesome, but probably not that easy, is to have access to the often existing facebook groups of accommodations. Those can be used to arrange key pickups and will save you from problems.

CONCLUSIONS

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

Yes I would. Especially those interested in game studies. While the paper-quality isn't that high, the unique practical approach of the many design courses is a refreshing perspective to the theory heavy Utrecht. Furthermore, the university is very accommodating and modern. And you can get sort of everywhere with English throughout the entire city, so that's nice. You'll learn the specifics of what makes the Dutch unique due to the minor differences with the Danes.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

Usually Copenhagen was accessible by NightTrain from Utrecht. They however decided to cut that one, so accessibility has been reduced.