

2014-2015

Report 1

faculty/college	Faculty of Humanities
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	Language and Culture Studies

PREPARATION	
exchange application process	Overall the information on how to apply was clear and didn't pose problems. Visiting some preparation meetings and watching the information on the websites of Utrecht and Porto university about the application process sufficed in equipping me with the tools needed. Both Porto University as my own international office were clear on when I could expect to hear what. This information was always on time.
counselling & support at Utrecht University	Any questions that I had about the application process or other aspects of studying abroad were answered quickly and adequately. I felt reassured and helped a lot by their answers to my questions.
academic preparation	As all of the subjects I followed in Portowere either introductory courses on a certain subject or courses building on knowledge I had gained before in Utrecht, additional academic preparation wasn't needed.
language preparation	During my time at Utrecht University I followed five courses of Portuguese language acquisition, the complete package. Therefore when I applied to study in Porto I felt fully prepared language-wise. It later turned out I was indeed sufficiently equipped to follow courses in Portuguese.
finances	Before leaving, as part of the application process, we had to make a financial plan. Making this plan I was helped by information on the sit of the University of Porto on the cost of living there. During my stay, my dutch study fund and the erasmus scholarship turned out to be enough to live in Porto without financial difficulties.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD	
study programme (content and organisational issues)	The study programme I followed consisted of courses varying in subject and quality. Overall the style of teaching is slightly old-fashioned in comparison to what I was used to: more contact-hours only lectures, no seminars, and very little production expected of us in terms of papers and group presentations. It might seem like something negative, but I found it very interesting and at times felt like I learnt more in this way. For me, the course syllabi took a lotof getting used to. It wasn't always clear what teachers wanted us to read and in the case of one teacher, we were ordered to read books that weren't being sold anymore. Other teachers had a very clear overview of the material we had to read, and put all this material in one place in pdf form. The content has been very interesting and revealing and has taught me a lot.

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academic quality of education activities
All of the teachers I have followed courses of were well schooled in their subjects and knew what they were talking about. However, in writing assignments, teachers were not very strict on annotation of the literature used. We got to read relevant academic sources.
counselling & support at receiving university abroad
Not much counselling was needed, but when it was, employees of the international office were friendly and helpful. Documents were sent back and forth to me timely.
transfer of credits
I received my transcript of records not long after returning to the Netherlands, and in time for the deadlines I had to comply with. The credits I had earned in Porto were transferred to my dutch degree without problems.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme
The Erasmus Student Network (ESN) organised a variety of events to introduce us to the student life in Porto. I must say that I missed a link with Portuguese students, and have the feeling the Erasmus community in Porto is slightly self-centred.
accommodation
It was quite easy to find accommodation with links provided to me by other students. After making a profile on portuguese housing websites I received many affordable room offers in the neighbourhood of the university.
leisure & culture
Porto is a beautiful city with many opportunities to experience culture and to have a good time. It required our own initiative, though, to break away from solely ESN organised events and experience the real Portugal. The danger of remaining within an Erasmus bubble is big, as I've also seen with Erasmus students back in Utrecht. The Portuguese people I met were friendly and hospitable, though not overly proud of their own culture, and not very interested in the Erasmus community as a whole, which I found very understandable.
suggestions/tips
Take the initiative to discover your host country on your own or with a small group of friends instead of getting caught up in a closed Erasmus community. I think every country has jewels that will only be found when one goes to look for them independently.

CONCLUSIONS

would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain
I would recommend both Porto and the University of Porto to students who want to study abroad within Europe. The University of Porto has good and interesting subjects to follow. There is a lot of culture and the countryside is very beautiful (you need to get up and go there by yourself though). People are helpful and friendly in Porto. The ESN offers easy ways of getting to know people, but also the Portuguese students at

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the university will be friendly if you take the effort to approach them.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

I think the best advice I could give was in the suggestions/tips section