



ERASMUS+ STUDIES UU Report 2014-2015

faculty/college	Science
level	<input type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	Theoretical Physics and Mathematical Sciences

destination city & country	Heidelberg, Germany
name university abroad	Heidelberg University
start date	01 / 10 / 2014 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	28 / 02 / 2015 (dd/mm/yyyy)

PREPARATION

exchange application process

The application process was less work than expected. I was expecting a lot of paperwork, but in the end it wasn't that much.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

This was very good. Liesbeth was very helpful and replies fast to emails which is kind of handy if you need signatures from abroad.

academic preparation

This was ok. The level in Heidelberg was comparable to the level in Utrecht.

language preparation

I didn't really prepare for it. My lectures were all in English, so I didn't expect German to be a problem. As a Dutch student I can also understand German quite well (though it is harder to do this in Heidelberg than in a city in the North). Speaking was a bit harder. When I applied, the people in Germany highly recommended to know German before coming to Heidelberg (or follow a language course the month before lectures start), but it is not that necessary. I didn't have time to do any language course, so I just hoped for the best and it went ok. Though it can be annoying that you can't speak to some of the older people in the shops. Also Germans really want you to know the language (I think Dutch people find that less important), so I guess I'd recommend you to know the basics of the language, especially when you stay longer than a semester.

finances

This was ok. I think food has approximately the same prices as in Holland. Rooms are in general a bit cheaper than in Utrecht. Though at the other hand, it is a bit more difficult to find a room for only a semester.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)

This went okey. Since I also do a master in Mathematics, I wanted to combine Math and Physics in Heidelberg. That was kind of a puzzle. But the Physics master is really big in Heidelberg, so there were a lot of courses to choose from and because of that I could find enough courses to get the required amount of points.



academic quality of education activities
This was comparable to the quality in Utrecht. Of course, some courses were a bit easier and some a bit harder, but you find that everywhere.
counselling & support at receiving university abroad
This was very good. In the beginning they tell you where to go, so if you have questions you can go there or email them.
transfer of credits
No idea yet, since I didn't receive all my grades yet.

STUDENT LIFE
welcome & orientation programme
This was very good. We were divided in groups based on study (so I was in a 'science' group), this of course has pros and cons. Pros are that you can meet people that follow courses with you (though in my case that was kind of hard, because I followed the more advanced courses and not so many people do that). Disadvantage is that you only meet 'science' people, why I also liked it to meet other people. During the introduction they told us everything we needed to know, showed us the buildings etc. Only thing I didn't like is that it was in German. For me it was ok, but for some people that absolutely don't speak German, the introduction was kind of useless. But as I understand, some internationals speak better German than English, so best thing I guess would be to have a German and an English introduction.
accommodation
I was very very lucky, the first people that responded to me also took me. My room couldn't be in a better place, it was close to everything. In general it's a bit harder (you can respond to offers at a few websites) since almost all people are looking for persons that stay longer. The university also offers rooms to students from abroad, but only 1/3 of the people get these rooms. I saw the room via skype, but some people also stay in a hostel while trying to get a room.
leisure & culture
Heidelberg is a beautiful city and is very touristy. It has a lot of bars and also a few clubs. I didn't like clubbing so much in Heidelberg, because I didn't like the music (though I also don't like clubbing so much in The Netherlands). I like bars a lot, so Heidelberg was perfect for me.
suggestions/tips
<p>Make sure you follow esn and AEGEE on facebook (or just the international students page), they organize a lot for foreign students (e.g. pubcrawls, city tours, tours to other cities). ESN also organizes a night for international students every Monday (and AEGEE on another day, but I never went there). I think these nights are good for meeting new people, if you arrive very very early. I arrived after the month in which the language course took place and during my second week I went there. But groups had already formed, so it was hard to mingle in. Later during the semester, I went there with friends and that way it was easier to meet new people. The pubcrawls are ideal to meet new people, you're divided in smaller groups such that you can get to know those people during that night. I joined two of them and liked them a lot.</p> <p>The university also organizes trips for international students to other cities in Germany. They tell you about that in the beginning, but you don't hear anything about it after that (at least in my case). Unfortunately I didn't have time to join any of these trips because I was always busy with other stuff. But these trips are quite cheap and you can meet other people.</p>



CONCLUSIONS

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

I would definitely recommend this university. It is situated in a beautiful place and a lot of students live there. The level of the university is also quite high, I also saw that as an advantage. But if you prefer to party all the time, it is maybe better to go to another university.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

Buy a bicycle. Though Heidelberg is not as good for bicycles as Utrecht, for Germany it's very good. The main parts of Heidelberg are also flat, so the hills won't be a problem. Bicycles are way faster than public transport. I even didn't buy the semesterticket (you pay 150 euro and can travel for free in the region in and around Heidelberg). Because I could sell my bicycle at the end of the semester this saved me a lot of money. There is some place where you can buy 2nd handed bicycles (not in the main bicycle shops, because bicycles are quite popular). Just google for it and you will find that place.