

2016-2017

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	Spanish Language and Culture

destination city & country	Cádiz, Spain
name university abroad	Universidad de Cádiz
start date	26 / 09 / 2016 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	12 / 02 / 2017 (dd/mm/yyyy)

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

PREPARATION	
exchange application process	The university had a information meeting. After that you could apply for your top three universities with a motivation letter etcetera. I had to reapply because I didn't get into my first two choices. After that you had to wait for your chosen university to send you an email and then the ball got rolling.
counselling & support at Utrecht University	For any questions I had, I could always email the international office! They were really helpful.
academic preparation	Since I could decide whichever course I wanted to do in Cádiz (well at least all the courses given in Spanish), there wasn't any academic preparation needed.
language preparation	Since I study Spanish myself I didn't need extra preparation, I did make the two language test for the Erasmus scholarship before and after my semester abroad. And I also flipped through my grammar books. That said, the best learning experience was actually the period in Cádiz: I have never spoken so much Spanish in my life!
finances	In terms of financing my semester abroad, I applied for the Erasmus scholarship. I also saved some money myself.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD	
study programme (content and organisational issues)	In Cádiz most of the courses are 6ECTS, so I needed five courses to have 30ECTS in the end. The first two-three weeks you could follow different clases to experience for yourself if you liked them. I really liked this because I decided to change some of my classes due to the fact that I couldn't understand the Andalusian accents of some of the teachers. It was quite a struggle though to find five courses which I enjoyed and didn't overlap. A lot of the courses in the same academic area where given at the same time. So it was quite stressful! In the end I decided to do the C1 Spanish course and the following four courses: Español como L2, La Historia y Cultura árabe I, Psicolingüística and Árabe I.

academic quality of education activities
To be honest, I don't feel like the university of Cádiz is on the same academic level as the university Utrecht. All though I did enjoy most of my clases, it was quite unclear how your grade would come about, there wasn't a lot of homework and in most of my clases the teacher would just talk for two hours without any input from the students and without any break. With the exception of the C1 Spanish course, these were really good and quite difficult as well.
counselling & support at receiving university abroad
I feel like we had to figure out almost everything ourselves without any help from our coordinadors. I didn't need any counselling but I do think they had some university psychologists.
transfer of credits
I'm not sure what the transfer of credits refers to, but the university did send my grades a few weeks after the exams with the ECTS as well.

STUDENT LIFE	
welcome & orientation programme	I didn't know there was an orientation programme until I discovered a couple of days before my departure on Facebook that there indeed was one. So I missed the first two days of the welcome week of ESN Cádiz, but since this was a whole week it wasn't really a problem. It entailed parties, a guided tour through Cádiz, a day trip to Sevilla etcetera. You could decide yourself in which activities you wanted to participate.
accommodation	The university had send me a link of a website where you could find all the offers of rooms. I decided to stay in a hostel the first couple of days to find a room in Cádiz itself (there were loads of other people who did the same). In the end I found a room through one of the other Erasmus students.
leisure & culture	Cádiz is a small town, it takes about 20-25 to walk from one side of the old part to the other side of the old town. It was really cheap to go out for tapas and the cinema was only four euros. Off course Cádiz has three beaches as well, so the first couple of weeks I mainly went to the beach in my free time and enjoyed the beautiful sunsets. As to culture, Cádiz has a beautiful big cathedral and it has a few museums, but nothing mayor.
suggestions/tips	Go and see the beautiful sunsets as much as you can! And go to the cinema: it is really cheap and a good way to improve your Spanish.

CONCLUSIONS	
would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain	Yes! The main reason being that Cádiz stole my heart. I really loved the city, it felt like a little village, everyone was so nice, and the sunsets and beaches were gorgeous. It really feels like my second home now and therefor I would recommend it to anyone. But if you're looking for a academic challenge (all though it definately wasn't easy), maybe you should look elsewhere.
do you have any additional advice or comments?	Speak as many Spanish as you can! Living abroad really helps way more than any course you take.