

2018-2019

permission to publish contact details** <i>See end note for * and **</i>	<i>optional; only if you allow students preparing for study abroad to contact you (directly)</i>
	my e-mail address <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: p.l.devette@students.uu.nl
faculty/college	Faculty of Humanities
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	History

destination city & country	Tallinn, Estonia
name university abroad	Tallinn University
start date	28 / 01 / 2019 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	30 / 06 / 2019 (dd/mm/yyyy)

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

PREPARATION	
exchange application process	The exchange application process went rather smooth. Of course it was sometimes a little bit complicated to get all the documents, but Tallinn University provided a digital application system which is very easy to use. Sometimes I had some question on what exactly I needed to fill in but the Estonian exchange studies coordinator was always willing to help and she responded to my emails quickly. I think the most complicated part was getting all the necessary documents from the UU, since there are so many different places where you need to get and submit documents you easily loose control on what needs to be done. Luckily the people at the UU international office were always keen to help so everything worked out
counselling & support at Utrecht University	The counseling and support at the UU is very good, emails get responded quickly and even when I had questions while being in Estonia the staff helped me really well when I called them on the phone.
academic preparation	I didn't do much academic preparation haha. I tried finding which books and course material I would need in Estonia but it isn't really specified clearly on their website so I just went to the classes and the teachers told me what to read and prepare and they provided free digital copies for everyone. Thank God I didn't have to purchase those expensive books.
language preparation	My main goal was to learn Russian in Estonia, so I took a course in Russian at the University of Amsterdam but the academic level was to high for me so I quit. If you want to learn a language be sure what your goal is with it;

e.g. do you want to have basic conversations with native speakers (basically being able to communicate) or do you want an in-depth study where you learn all sorts of linguistic characteristics that you don't use in everyday conversations? I wanted to just be able to speak Russian with Russian-speakers and I don't care so much for all the linguistic characteristics, so studying a language in a university is not an option for me anymore. A language course is.

finances

I more or less expected that Estonia would be cheaper than the Netherlands but I fooled myself. It's still an affordable country, but mostly food and drinks are more expensive than the Netherlands. Before my departure I worked for 4 months so I saved up quite a lot of money. I loan the maximum amount of money that is allowed (around 1000 euro's), which was plenty enough to cover all my costs. I think if you have 600-700€/month available it would be enough to cover your expenses (rent/food/drinks). My rent was cheap (130€/month) but that's about it. Vegetables, fruit, meat almost everything has to be imported so it's expensive. Just like Finland, Estonia raises large taxes on alcoholic beverages so in general those are expensive, expect to pay around 1.20-1.50 euros for a beer (500mL) in the supermarket and 3.00-5.00 euros in a pub or club. Strong liquor is even worse. I'm not really a clubgoer so most of my money went to travelling, I visited almost every country nearby that I could with the time I had. If want to have a large budget to also travel a lot like me, it's advisable to get side-job at a bar or food delivery.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)

My study programme consists of Russian- and history-related subjects. I took Russian A1 (R1), Russian History (RH), History and Memory (HM) and Estonian Regional Studies (ERS). R1 was nice, but sadly our teacher was far from proficient in English eventhough she claimed otherwise. She was understandable enough to make sense from what she was saying but that's about it. The course was not really hard, just attend all the classes and do your homework and you're fine. I liked that it was relatively easy, because now I have a basic vocabulary and sense of grammar. I'm now also more encouraged to continue taking Russian courses when I get back to NL. RH was very interesting, because this type of history rarely gets attention in the Netherlands, only one or two universities in NL give equivalent courses. The organisation was a bit odd, because the professor was always really well prepared for the lecture and had a nice voice to listen to. Only the rest of the students annoyed me because no one every responds when the teacher asks a question. Also when we had to give a presentation about that week's literature no one answered our questions. Students there really lack participation. HM was a master's level course and I liked that we were with a small group of people that were a little more serious than the average bachelor level student. Good teachers and interesting excursions. ERS was a bit of a joke haha. Very poorly organized, with a different teacher every week and basically only excursions to boring museums. Easy to pass but hard to keep up with. It did provide me with a broad knowledge about Estonian culture and history, so if you're into that than it might be worth taking.

academic quality of education activities

I would not say that the academic quality is very high, I'm a third year bachelor student and the courses I generally take at Utrecht are quite intensive and require active participation. My courses in Estonia would be around the same level as the history courses I took in my first year at the UU.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

Excellent, the exchange student coordinator was always there when I needed her and her English is very good as well. Always helpful.

transfer of credits

I took some time before all my courses were graded but I received my transcript of records in good shape. At TLU they grade with letters from F, being the lowest to A, being the highest.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

On the 28th of January we went to a presentation where the rector explained what Estonia and TLU are like and we got a tour through the university. We were also introduced to the local Erasmus student organization and they organized all kinds of nice trips and activities for Erasmus students.

accommodation

I stayed at the university dormitory and it was the worst accommodation I ever had. It's cheap (130€/month) and it gets cleaned every week, those are the only advantages of it. Only I shared the bedroom (yes) with two other people and I had arguments with one of them all the time. One of these guys farts and snores really loudly at night so I hardly slept. I got used to it after a while but it's far from something I can recommend. The kitchen is also not provided with cutlery or pots and pans, so you have to get those yourself. It's also poorly ventilated, which made the farting of my roommate unbearable and the other people that lived there cooked really stong-smelling dishes which I was able to smell already in the hallway when I approached the door. An advantage was that only 5 people (including me) lived in the apartment, most apartments have 10 residents and those are even worse, because there's always people partying in the kitchen and making noise when you just want to go to sleep. I strongly advise to find a cheap apartment on Facebook or a housing website, it's about as hard finding something nice and affordable as it is in Utrecht so start early.

leisure & culture

Tallinn is not really a student city so I found it hard to find things to do. I did some clubbing in the beginning but after the second month I started to hate it because I'm not fond of the music and the people that go there, but that's just my personal experience. I mostly travelled with friends or by myself in and out of Estonia. I have a passion for old cars, so when I had a week holiday in March, I flew back the Netherlands, bought a 30 y/o car and drove it all the way to Tallinn. It took me three days. An adventure of a life time. I also used the car to go to all kinds of national parks in Estonia and to visit Riga (recommended). This is quite an extraordinary example but I can tell you that there's plenty of time to travel, it's ok to miss a few lectures/seminars. I also went to Russia, Sweden and Finland, those country's are expensive but getting there was relatively cheap. The ferry to Finland costs somewhere between 20-30 euros (roundtrip), the Swedish ferry was 60 euros (roundtrip) and Russia was around 150 euros for a week stay (excl. 60€ visa) by a trip company.

suggestions/tips

Travel as much as you can, especially Russia is highly recommended. Estonia is nice and cool in the first weeks you stay there, but you get bored by it at one point. It's cheaper than Estonia and eventhough few people speak English there, they are usually very friendly.

CONCLUSIONS

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

Not necessarily, it really depends on the kind of person you are. My interests are different than most and I'm not much a big fan of clubbing, so I had a hard time trying to fit in with the rest. What also not really helped is that I was the only Dutch person in Tallinn University and I saw that most friend groups are people that speak the same language. Italians hang out with Italians, French with French, Germans with Germans, etc. Also, Estonians are in general an introverted people so most Estonians get awkward when you want to have a small talk conversation with them or completely avoid you. If you are super social and are able to make friends with

everyone then you're probably fine staying in Estonia. For me it was not so the case, I was unpeasantly surprised that friend groups only consist of people speaking the same language. My friend in Sweden did not experience the same thing, so it could be something Estonian. Besides, the life in the dormitory didn't allow me to retreat into the bedroom because there was always an annoying roommate around. Making friends was hard for me and in combination with the dreary weather I felt sad for a big part of my stay here.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

I think if you go here with one or two friends and get a nice place to live, you are already ten times better off than me. I guess I was just unlucky. I made some dope international friends and travelled a lot but I enjoyed it not as much as I would expect it to. Still, I don't regret it since I experienced a lot of cool things too and I had a lot of time to overthink life. I also heard good stories about people who went on an Erasmus exchange to Tartu, that's a more student-centered city so you could try your luck there too.

2017-2018

e-mail address	<i>optional; only if you don't mind students preparing for study abroad contacting you directly</i> c.d.nieuwendijk@students.uu.nl
faculty/college	Humanities
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	Media & Culture

destination city & country	Tallinn, Estonia
name university abroad	Tallinn University
start date	28 / 08 / 2017 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	17 / 01 / 2018 (dd/mm/yyyy)

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

PREPARATION	
exchange application process	There's a lot of paper work but don't let it scare you. The guidelines about which documents you need to fill in are really clear and examples are given.
counselling & support at Utrecht University	In my experience the International Office responded really quickly on their e-mails. Since most contact finds place online this was really helpful.
academic preparation	Since I wanted to follow mostly practical courses academic preparation was not really the case for me.
language preparation	If you study at the UU you automatically get a confirmation of the English level B2. Additionally you will make a language test for the Erasmus+ program. With this you can find out for yourself what your actual level of English would be.
finances	When you apply for an exchange semester, one of the forms you have to fill in is a financial report. In this report you will figure out how much money you will probably need for your exchange semester: how much you will earn in this period and how much you will spend. This way for me it became really clear what I could expect and how much money I needed to start saving. In general I started to save a lot of money, not necessarily because the country I went to was expensive, but because I knew I wanted to live life to the fullest.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD	
study programme (content and organisational issues)	I followed most courses at the Baltic Film and Media School department and at the Arts department and most of them were quite practical. I learned more about photography and filmmaking. I enjoyed the content of the

<p>courses since the practical courses were totally different from what I was used to at the UU. From the theoretical courses I recognized a lot of theories and authors I already learned about. Still there were some different perspectives.</p> <p>Organizationally there were some issues at the beginning. In our first week we heard that in most of the practical courses only a maximum of 5 exchange students were allowed to participate. At that moment we were with like 20 to 30 exchange students and I started to panic a bit. I was afraid I would'n't get into the courses I wanted - all the courses of my learning agreement - and I didn't get why the university accepted so many people to this program if they had such few places. Eventually I could be relieved by some teachers who told us it was not that strict.. and that they didn't mind having more exchange students. So eventually I got accepted to all the courses I wanted the most. There were only 2 courses I couldn't get in but the Film and Media department coördinator really helped me with choosing different courses which would also fit in my schedule and interests.</p>
<p>academic quality of education activities</p>
<p>Of the few theoretical courses I had, the academic quality was not that high in my opinion. For those courses it was enough to show up and be in class; reading academical articles or something like that was not necessary. The theoretical courses were mostly about discussing theories together.</p>
<p>counselling & support at receiving university abroad</p>
<p>Quick responses from the University itself. Clear information and a clear website, which made searching specific things easy. I also requested a 'student mentor' but I didn't even met her during my stay. So in the end that was not really necessary to have, since I did not really need someone's help to figure out life there. As said before, the coördinator of my study program was also really helpful in finding me the best alternative courses.</p>
<p>transfer of credits</p>
<p>Tallinn University has a good online system in which you can see your courses, your learning agreement, and receive all your grades and credits.</p>

<p>STUDENT LIFE</p>	
<p>welcome & orientation programme</p>	<p>The whole first week was orientation week. We got a lot of information.. there were so many things we had to take care off our first weeks of our stay in Estonia... For example you had to register as a citizen of Tallinn (in order to get free transport!) and then you first had to register at some office and then go to the police station and it took a long time. But it was worth it as soon as you received your Estonian ID - pretty cool to have. They also told us a lot about Estonia and it's history. The traditions and the way people act. The University had a nice welcome program with live music and drinks and food, but also the ESN mad a huge contribution to my first weeks there. They organized a lot of 'get to know each other' activities and days were fully planned with fun.</p>
<p>accommodation</p>	<p>In July, before my departure, I got the notification I couldn't get a place into the dormitories. This is when a lot of stress begun since I had only 1 month left to find another place to stay. Through FaceBook i came in contact with 3 other exchange students (from France and Austria) and together we started searching for a private apartment. It was a lot to organize and took quite some time but in the end I found an apartment for us right next to the university and then we really had our own place with our own bedrooms (not shared like in most dormitories) and with a lot of freedom.</p>
<p>leisure & culture</p>	<p>The ESN in Tallinn is really big and organize a lot of activies and trips. Especially the first weeks / months it was so easy to get to know people and also to get to know the Estonian culture.</p>

Already my first days I fell i love with Tallinn. The city had everything I want: an old, medieval Town, nice parks, a beach and amazing viewing points. There were a lot of cafés were I often went with my friends, either during the day for a coffee or during the night for a beer. Since the city is not that big it was the perfect Erasmus city since there were certain places all Erasmus students went to on specific nights.

suggestions/tips

Start looking for apartments / accomodations early! I waited till I knew for sure if I could get a place into the dormitories or not, and then i had a lot of stress finding something else afterwards. In the end I'm so happy I lived in my own apartment and not in the dormitories so I would suggest other students to just start looking early at real estate websites to have a lot of possibilities and choice regarding location and price.

CONCLUSIONS

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

If you are looking for a university which academically challenges you, looking at the media department I would not recommend the university. If you are looking for some practical courses and experiences, where it's more important to work together with other students, either by making pictures/films or by discussing cultural differences, I would recommend Tallinn University.

What i will recommend FOR SURE is the destination!! Estonia is located really central and it's quite small so it's so easy to travel to surrounding countries as well! I didn't hear anyone else who went on exchange (in another country) who travelled as much as me and my friends from Tallinn did. You could easily take a bus to Lithounia, Latvia and Russia or go by boat to Finland. I visted as well Helsinki as Finish Lapland. I took a cruise to Stockholm, Sweden. I even took cheap flights to Copenhagen and Oslo! I travelled around in Estonia itself as well, it was really easy to discover this country by bus. Estonia really is the perfect place to discover the hidden gems of Northern Europe. While living in a medieval city near the beach. I loved every second of it.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

Wherever you go: don't play it safe. Go somewhere you would normally never go to. Go out of your comfort zone. Go alone. Make the most out of your time - 5 months seems a lot but you don't want to let them to just pass you by. For me my exchange semester was for a huge part about travelling and discovering the country and other countries. You have the time for it! Use it! Save money beforehand because you will need it. Don't be too 'oh no that costs money..', cause you will only regret it in the end. Go partying. I understand that students also want to take their studies seriously but when you're on exchange don't feel too obligated - don't spend your whole day in the library studying. Otherwise why did you even go abroad. And mostly, a bit of cliché, but don't forget to sometimes stand still and think about your life at that moment. What a chance you have got and on what kind of crazy adventure you are. Because it is an adventure, and looking back I'm not necessarily sad that it's over, I'm just so intensely happy I experienced it.

Report 1

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

destination city & country	Tallinn, Estonia
name university abroad	Tallinn University
start date	30 / 01 / 2017 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	30 / 06 / 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 process is pretty easy. Tallinn university has made a clear online site where you can easily upload all new information when it is time to do so. All information comes on time, and communication was very clear.
counselling & support at Utrecht University	
	I was well prepared, there were no big struggles before or during my stay that I wasn't prepared for.
academic preparation	
	The level education in the Netherlands is higher than in Tallinn, I my academic preparation was perfectly fine.
language preparation	
	I never really struggled with any language requirements.
finances	
	No problem.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD	
study programme (content and organisational issues)	
	The (psychology) subjects of my studies were very interesting. It was cool to see a perspectives that were slightly different from the regular Anglo-American perspectives that are thought in the Netherlands.
academic quality of education activities	
	The quality of the education in Tallinn and the level of expertise of the teachers is fine, but the material was quite easy and could have been a little bit more challenging.
counselling & support at receiving university abroad	
	All necessary support is available
transfer of credits	
	Tallinn university uses an A-F system. There are also courses that just give a pass/fail, so you need to be aware of that.

STUDENT LIFE	
welcome & orientation programme	
	The orientation was this year in the same week as the start of the classes, so that was a bit though. But it is manageable. The orientation information is very clear and thorough, and there are plenty of nice activities that give you the opportunity to get to know the other students and the city.
accommodation	
	Tallinn University offers accommodation for most of the students. I chose to find my own place, which is not super difficult. The accommodation that the University offers is okay, although you most likely have to share a room.
leisure & culture	
	The culture is in fact surprisingly similar to West-European culture, mainly because of the German influences in Tallinn. But you will most likely spend the most time with international students. Estonians are a bit shy and introvert, but they can be nice if you get to know them. Finally, there are more than enough things to explore in the city, and also some cool spots in the country. Also, traveling to neighbouring and nearby countries such as Latvia, Lithuania, Russia, Sweden and Finland is easy and cheap.
suggestions/tips	
	I would highly recommend Tallinn University if you plan to do trips during your stay!

CONCLUSIONS	
would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain	
	I would, but I won't say that it's the greatest university or city or anything. Everything is organized perfectly fine here, and you are supported in every necessary way. Estonia is a nice country, and surprisingly progressive and well organized. But it is not super special or amazing. The level of education is fine, but not as great as in the Netherlands. I would recommend it most to people who are planning to make trips during their stay and/or people that are interested in humanities and international relations.
do you have any additional advice or comments?	
	Not really.

Report 2

faculty/college	Humanities
level	<input type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	Master Intercultural Communication
destination city & country	Tallinn, Estland
name university abroad	Tallinn University
start date	01 / 09 / 2016 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	09 / 12 / 2016 (dd/mm/yyyy)

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

PREPARATION	
exchange application process	
The administrative process was in my opinion taking too long. You should start early with the whole application process and keep track of all the deadlines.	
counselling & support at Utrecht University	
The counselor at Utrecht University was very helpful and always answered my questions in a short period of time.	
academic preparation	
The academic preparation I had for this program was suitable.	
language preparation	
Before you take part in the study abroad, you are requested to complete a language assessment test. This will indicate your level of English. From my personal experience I can say that I have not had any trouble with making myself understood during this study abroad.	
finances	
It depends on the cost of living in the country where you are going to spend your semester abroad. In Tallinn everything was cheaper than in Utrecht. But if you for example would go to Cambridge it would obviously cost more than Utrecht. The student grant really helps you to have a bit more 'financial space'.	

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD	
study programme (content and organisational issues)	
The content of the courses really varied in this programme. The level of difficulty as well. Some courses were quite hard, and you had to spend approximately 25 hours extra a week to complete the assignment with a high grade. Other courses were really easy and with a little effort you could get an A.	
academic quality of education activities	
See my statement above.	
counselling & support at receiving university abroad	
I am very positive about the counselling and support of Tallinn University. I felt very welcome and the staff was very kind in answering all my questions with great patience.	
transfer of credits	
I completed this semester with good grades. Although I think that with some courses it was easier to get a high grade than others. In Utrecht University it is for example very uncommon to receive an 'A', where this is very normal to receive in other countries.	

STUDENT LIFE	
welcome & orientation programme	
The programme was very warm and welcoming and I met a lot of friendly people. Next to that I directly learned a lot about the Estonian culture and the University.	
accommodation	

Please always take an apartment in the city center, or close to the University. I lived far away from both since it was cheaper. But in the end I spend a lot on public transportation and taxi's. If I would have lived in the city center I could have walked, and payed a bit extra rent.

leisure & culture

Living in Tallinn was great. There is a lot to see and to do and you can very easily cross the border to neighbouring countries.

suggestions/tips

Always stay open minded.

CONCLUSIONS

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

I would recommend both. Once you learn about the Estonian culture you very much appreciate it. I had a great time studying at Tallinn University and can sincerely recommend going there.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

Enjoy your stay abroad!