

2018-2019

Report 1

Please use Tab to go to the next (text) box.

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: j.l.j.heesewijk@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	French Language and Culture

destination city & country	Montpellier, France
name university abroad	université Paul Valéry, Montpellier III
start date	11 / 09 / 2018 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	21 / 12 / 2018 (dd/mm/yyyy)

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

PREPARATION	
exchange application process	Because of some changes in my study programme my stay abroad took place a bit earlier than expected, which caused some stress. In the end everything was well arranged and I got all the time to prepare for my time abroad.
counselling & support at Utrecht University	Utrecht University helped me during my preparation. There was Mrs Kremers that told me to relax and the international office was there to answer my e-mails every time.
academic preparation	I study French Language and Culture in the Netherlands which, of course, really helped me during my stay in France. I also learned English and Spanish which were also useful as a preparation.
language preparation	As I have already said I study French Language and Culture at the UU. The language courses I followed in Utrecht were a great preparation for my stay in France.
finances	I had saved some money to use in France and the Erasmus grant that was about to come my way would be really helpful for me.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD	
study programme (content and organisational issues)	I followed courses at the linguistics faculty of the French university, as well as an erasmus course about French culture and history and an additional French course.

Montpellier - Université Paul Valéry 3

academic quality of education activities
The way of teaching is really different from what I was used to in Utrecht. Teachers seemed less professional to me and the university seemed poorer (for example: teachers had to bring their own beamers and laptops).
counselling & support at receiving university abroad
I am not very positive about this. My personal tutor in France for example did not answer my e-mails and it took some time before we could finally meet so she could sign my Contrat d'études. The international office was better I think because they were more helpful and were always there for us.
transfer of credits
Making timetables was like a big puzzle, but eventually I had one. I sent the Transcript of Records to the international office of Utrecht University.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme
This was great. In the beginning there were a lot of events and activities especially for (international) students in which I met a lot of people. A few of those people I still call my friends and I have even met them again since I'm back in the Netherlands.
accommodation
There was no place for me at the "cité universitaire". This caused a lot of stress because I did not want to arrive in Montpellier without a room/space to live. Fortunately a French friend of mine recommended me roomlala, which is a site where you can rent rooms per month. Here I found a room in a nice student house.
leisure & culture
There were all kind of activities and events for international students. The organisation ESN (European Student Network) organized a lot of parties I went to sometimes and with my friends I visited some nice cities in the environment of Montpellier. Every first Sunday of the month all museums were for free, and so I went to visit the Musée Fabre, which was very interesting. And then there was of course the beach which was situated 30 minutes from the city, I have been there some times.
suggestions/tips
I would recommend everyone to join the parties and to go to erasmus activities because it is a great way of making new friends which makes your Erasmus experience incredible. You can follow all the activities/events on facebook pages and in whatsapp groups.

CONCLUSIONS

would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain
100% yes. The city of Montpplier is really great - not too big and not too small - and the university is fine. It was very interesting for me to see how courses were given in an other country and I learned a lot from other students who had other ways of thinking than we have in the Netherlands.
do you have any additional advice or comments?
Don't be afraid to go, just do it if it is possible.

Report 2

faculty/college	Universiteit Utrecht
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	Franse Taal en Cultuur/French Language and Culture

destination city & country	MONTPELLIER, France
name university abroad	Université Paul Valéry III
start date	03 / 09 / 2018 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	01 / 02 / 2019 (dd/mm/yyyy)

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

PREPARATION	
exchange application process	
	It was very important to have all the needed documents filled in on time so that there will be no problems with your application for your stay abroad. It was not very difficult to do so, you just need to make sure to not miss the deadlines and have everything signed on time.
counselling & support at Utrecht University	
	The International Office of Utrecht University is very helpful and supportive when it comes to students who are preparing to study abroad. With a few counselling sessions with all concerned students they prepared us with examples, experiences of students who already went abroad etc. It was very helpful.
academic preparation	
	I didn't really prepare myself academically because I expected it to be comparable with what I learned at Utrecht University.
language preparation	
	Before going to my host country/university it was important for me to revisit some grammatical aspects of French and to broaden my vocabulary a bit to feel a little bit more at ease with myself.
finances	
	I made a financial plan with my savings, my incomes (loan and grant) and the costs I was going to have every month. In that way I had a more clear idea of how everything was going to go financially.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD	
study programme (content and organisational issues)	
	I had to choose my subjects within the criteria of the agreement between the two universities, so I was not free to choose whatever subject I wanted. However I managed to choose a variety of very interesting subjects, from Russian to phonology. The organisation was difficult though, because we didn't get a lot of help with the inscriptions. We needed to make our own timetables and figure out on our own where our classes were given. But once we had it all figured out it was less difficult.
academic quality of education activities	

Montpellier - Université Paul Valéry 3

The quality of the courses was pretty good. The teachers were good and qualified. The only thing I didn't like and wasn't used to was the fact that we had no tests except in the examweeks. That caused me sometimes lack of motivation.
counselling & support at receiving university abroad
If needed there was counselling and support available, I didn't use it though.
transfer of credits
The transfer of credits was fluent and well done. I haven't had any problems with it.

STUDENT LIFE
welcome & orientation programme
There were a lot of student orientation programmes and students who organised welcome parties and barbecues etc. I didn't really partake in it because I didn't feel like it, but there were a lot of activities for those who were interested!
accommodation
I found accomodation on my own with help of people I already knew in the region of Montpellier. I did apply for a room on campus, but the end of July we heard that it was not possible for us (me and a friend) to get rooms on campus because everything was already taken. That was a real deception because we needed to find accomodation on our own as soon as possible. In the end it all worked out.
leisure & culture
There were a lot of cultural activities, organised trips to cities nearby, parties to attend etc. Montpellier was an incredible city to live in!
suggestions/tips
Go out, make friends and enjoy your experience abroad to the fullest! This is a once in a lifetime kind of period in your life you will never forget!

CONCLUSIONS
would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain
Yes I most certainly do. The only thing you must not do is stress because the universities here are not as organised and strict as Utrecht. You need to figure out a lot of things on your own, so don't panic is something doesn't go the way you wanted it. Montpellier is a beautiful city full of life, I loved living and studying here. I really recommend it to anyone who loves the climate, the people and the "french spirit"!
do you have any additional advice or comments?
/

2017-2018
Report 1

faculty/college	Humanities
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	French language & culture + German language & culture

destination city & country	Montpellier, France
name university abroad	Université Paul-Valéry Montpellier 3
start date	04 / 09 / 2017 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	22 / 12 / 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 application process was not very hard or complicated, you just have to start in time. Maybe already once you start in september, start with orientating and looking on websites of universities you like. Also, it is not like you are committing to the courses you choose at this point, you can always change afterwards.
counselling & support at Utrecht University	
	I am very satisfied with the support from the international office humanities, they always answer quickly your e-mails, are very helpful and you can always just pass by their office on the Drift if you have a question.
academic preparation	
	I did some individual preparation for the specific courses I wanted to do in Montpellier. For example, I have followed philosophy and spanish courses in Montpellier. I wasn't sure if was sufficiently prepared so during summer I studied some spanish and also read an introduction to philosophy.
language preparation	
	For the language preparation I didn't do that much since I already study the language I will need in France. It was possible to do a preparation language course in Montpellier before starting the semester, but I didn't participate in it.
finances	
	Finances were not really a problem since I have a studentloan which i can elevate if needed, also I received the biggest part of the Erasmus grant before I left which was useful.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD	
study programme (content and organisational issues)	
	The organisation was very relaxed. We actually choose whatever courses we wanted from all faculties, there were no restrictions. I chose a wide variety of courses. In the first week we could try out various courses and afterwards we had to make a choice. I really like it that it was not so strict as at home.
academic quality of education activities	

Montpellier - Université Paul Valéry 3

In general I'm satisfied with the academic quality of the courses. It's hard to judge since I followed courses at a lot of different faculties. I think I improved my French a lot during the courses, especially the so-called "speaking language", I learned a lot of vocabulary that I wouldn't have learned at home.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

The Erasmus office there organized several meetings and kept us up to date about everything we need to know. I am very satisfied with the way they guided us through all the organisational issues.

transfer of credits

There is no problem at all with the transfer of credits. The semester ended with Christmas and at the end of January you can see the grades in the online learning environment of the university. Afterwards they will send the transcript of records to Utrecht and to you.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

There was not really a welcome & orientation programme. There were two information meetings, but they were more about the organisational issues at the university. It was also possible to participate in a buddy programme, but unfortunately my buddy didn't communicate very well so in the end we didn't really meet, but I heard a lot of positive stories from other students about it.

accommodation

I was lucky to get accommodation from the university, in a student residence on the campus. The rent is really low if you compare it to the private sector, or to Utrecht general. A minus was that we had to buy all our kitchen equipment, which we didn't know in advance. In the beginning this caused some frustration and unexpected costs. But on the other hand the residence was well-situated, there was a 24/7 reception and there were a lot of international students which is good in the beginning. Also it's possible for international students to apply for a subsidy for accommodation of 90 euros per month.

leisure & culture

Montpellier is a great city to study. The weather is great, also during the wintersemester. The atmosphere in the south of France is very relaxed, the French don't worry so much there. There are lots of possibilities for cultural trips in and outside the city. There are a lot of small cities close to Montpellier that one can visit during the weekend. There are also various organisations that organise trips to nature or other cities.

suggestions/tips

I would suggest everyone who goes to Montpellier or France for that matter to be very open/chill towards new things. In France things are organised very differently from in the Netherlands. Usually that means more administration, longer waiting etc. You'll have the feeling that things are unnecessarily complicated. For example, when you have to open a bank, insurance or have to fill out dossiers for the student residence. In the beginning you might want to protest or not do all those things, but in the end I decided to just go with their system and practice being patient. It is good to arrive at least one week in advance to take care of this administrative stuff. Although it can be a bit hard/overwhelming when you arrive, I would like to say that this is normal, seeing how different everything is organized in the south of France. Also it would be good to at least accept that there will be moments where you will be homesick/missing family or friends. Because when I left I had this perfect image of studying abroad, which was unrealistic. Just like at home there will be positive and negative moments.

CONCLUSIONS

Montpellier - Université Paul Valéry 3

would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain
Yes , I would recommend Montpellier to everybody. The city, the campus and the surroundings are very beautiful. The people there are very helpful and relaxed concerning the organisational issues and as a lifestyle in general. The weather and the cultural possibilities are great.It's a great way to get to know other people, cultures and become more independent.
do you have any additional advice or comments?

2016 – 2017**Report 1**

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

destination city & country	Montpellier, France
name university abroad	Université Paul Valéry Montpellier III
start date	05 / 09 / 2016 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	16 / 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 application process takes a long time and you have to fill in a lot of forms. If you start early you don't have to stress about getting someone's autograph at the last moment or about deadlines. Also sometimes the administration at the receiving university is a little slower or more chaotic than you would expect, so watch out for that.
counselling & support at Utrecht University	The International Office counsels and supports very well. They have answers to every question and respond usually very fast too. They are super friendly and will help you with anything, also when you have already left for your semester abroad.
academic preparation	I didn't really prepare myself academically. I took French language acquisition courses (TV1, 2 and 3) and that's it. In France I only took introductory classes, so I didn't need any academic preparation other than my level of French.
language preparation	The French language and culture bachelor is completely in French and for me that was sufficient.

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finances
I didn't have any problems financially. Before I left I had all the money I needed and even though the Erasmus grant came later than expected, everything went well and I didn't have any trouble.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)
The first two/three weeks of my stay in France were really chaotic. Nothing went as planned and I had to redo almost my entire course list. The biggest problem was the time table over there: course didn't overlap completely but too much to do both courses, classes were too full cause only one of the classes was scheduled at a reasonable hour and so on. Some courses completely disappeared or expected a little more background than stated . But you will definitely figure it out, the receiving university was really relaxed about changing courses even in that meant you missed the first three or four classes.
academic quality of education activities
Nothing spectacular but better than the expectations I made reading the reports from students who went to the same university before me. I think the quality was not outstanding but it was good enough, it challenged me because it was still in French.
counselling & support at receiving university abroad
The counselling and support at the university of Utrecht felt more personal but there was nothing wrong with the counselling in France. People were really helpful and they did everything they could to solve your problems. Don't be afraid to ask the people of the receiving university for help.
transfer of credits
Has not happened yet. For me, I have to wait until all students have done the retake exams they wanted to do and the professors have graded those, so that takes a really long time.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme
There was one meeting with all Erasmus students where they explained everything about the university and how everything worked. After that you could contact your coordinator. I thought the welcome and orientation programme was minimally organised and I still had a lot of questions but this way you have to talk to other Erasmus students to exchange problems and solutions. On the contrary, ESN organized a lot of things and you get to know some many people, so I recommend going there.
accommodation
I stayed at a student residence that the university recommended. The room was really small, made for sleeping only, it wasn't really a room you could study or chill in. Also, there was almost no contact with neighbors and I felt really isolated sometimes. I really recommend looking for your own place to stay with other Erasmus people or even local people, not something you find via the university (cité universitaire).
leisure & culture
Really good. There is so much to do and to see in Montpellier and also around Montpellier. I didn't have enough time to see everything cause the options are limitless.
suggestions/tips
Don't go live in a cité universitaire, even though it feels safer because you are assured of a room when you arrive in the city. Everyone I talked to said it is really easy to find a place to live outside of cité universitaire and

Montpellier - Université Paul Valéry 3

it is so much more fun. Also try to go to as many as possible ESN events, cause you will meet the same people and they can become your 'steady' group of friends.

CONCLUSIONS

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

Yes, very much so. It is different and chaotic at first, but I think that ultimately that is what makes it so much fun. The atmosphere around the university campus is really good, everyone is relaxed and doesn't judge you. Most of the professors have a passion for the subject they teach and are willing to help you with anything. The weather is especially in the beginning of the semester really good and it just feels so good to be in Montpellier in general.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

Go to the events ESN organizes, they are really fun and they help you meet other Erasmus students.

Report 2

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

destination city & country	Montpellier, France
name university abroad	Université Paul Valéry III
start date	08 / 09 / 2016 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	18 / 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

This went very easily. Everything was explained very well in emails and on the website of the UU. The university also gives you a nice hand-out in which you can see exactly when the deadlines are for the documents you have to sign and hand in. Commence as soon as you can, because it takes some time before everything is signed!

counselling & support at Utrecht University

The support from the UU was great! As I explained above, they will inform you very well and early so you will not miss a document or a deadline. You can also always contact them.

academic preparation

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language preparation

I study French, so I did not really prepare myself by following extra French courses, because all my courses were already in French, but if you do not study French I would really recommend you to follow some courses.

finances

Montpellier - Université Paul Valéry 3

It is useful to write down for yourself what your incomes and outcomes will be. Also make sure you start as soon as possible with arranging your Erasmus Grant. I must say that I thought I would spend less money than I eventually did, so make sure you also have some savings.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)

Because I study French, I was free to choose every course that I liked. I must say that this was a quite difficult job, because this university only gives the name and amount of ECTS of the course. There will be no description, which can make it difficult to decide whether you would like it or not. But don't worry! You can still change courses within your first 3 weeks/month of your stay. They don't matter at all. You can join classes and decide afterwards if you would like to follow this course or not. One tip: try to make this decision as soon as possible, otherwise you would miss a lot of courses/information.

academic quality of education activities

The academic quality was quite a shock. The teachers I had didn't put any effort in making PowerPoints or writing things on the board. They were literally sitting behind their desk with a mic in their hands. I have spoken with another friend of mine who studied in Paris and she said it was exactly the same over there. I think it is just the way of teaching in France. If your French is on a B1 level, I shouldn't worry that much, you'll get used to it quite fast.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

The counselling and support was very good! There was a special office for Erasmus students with people who could help you anytime.

transfer of credits

I received my notes within a month I guess, so that is quite fast.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

There is a welcome programme special for Erasmus students. They will give a lot of information about it in the first days, so you won't miss a thing. You shouldn't be scared to make less friends, a lot of things are being organised in the city for students and Erasmus students.

accommodation

I stayed at a campus (Voie Domitienne). This campus looked very well even though the rooms were quite small. Also, it is located 15 minutes from the center (by tram), which was quite difficult sometimes. The campus was great, really, but if you have the opportunity to hire a room/an apartment in the centre, I would recommend that. The centre is awesome and by living there, I feel, you will have the full experience of living in France.

leisure & culture

The city is awesome!! It is not too big and not too small and the centre is filled with shops, cute little streets, restaurants, parks and some beautiful houses/monuments. Also the food in the restaurants is fantastic! The nightlife of Montpellier is also great! You will find nice bars and little clubs in almost the same area. You do not have to take the tram to go from one bar to the other. You can also go to the beach by tram.

suggestions/tips

Centre commercial Polygone (if you want to shop and have all the shops in one building ;))

The beach

Montpellier - Université Paul Valéry 3

Arc de Triomphe (beautiful, and also close to a big park with a nice view)
 Club Panama, Barberousse, Shakespeare, Rockstore (if you want to go out for a beer or party)
 L'Esplanade (park)

CONCLUSIONS

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

YES YES YES! If you do not want to live in a city which is too big, then Montpellier would be perfect for you! You can find and do everything of the centre and enjoy the French lifestyle. Don't be scared to feel alone, because there are a lot of things organised for you as an Erasmus student!

do you have any additional advice or comments?

Start on time with signing and sending your documents to the sending and receiving institution.

AND ENJOY!!!! It is over before you know

Report 3

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

destination city & country	Montpellier, France
name university abroad	Université Paul Valéry III
start date	7 / 09 / 2016 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	18 / 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 application process wasn't too difficult. It's a lot of paperwork, but if you just follow the steps and keep yourself to the deadlines it's doable.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

Utrecht University has held several meetings with information for students who wanted to go on an exchange. This was very helpful because they explain how it works, what you can expect, what you have to do in order to be able to go abroad. In addition, you can always plan a meeting with the counselor of the international office so in general this was pleasant.

academic preparation

I'm studying French language and culture, so the academic (as well as the language) preparation was perfectly well in order to go to France.

language preparation

Montpellier - Université Paul Valéry 3

I have followed all the language classes of French at Utrecht University , I was used to having classes in French, having to talk and write in French, so the language preparation was perfect. If you don't study French, I would strongly recommend you to follow the language courses of at least TV1 and TV2 in Utrecht.

finances

I applied for an Erasmus grant, I get a student grant (studiefinanciering) and I applied for a grant for the public transport (OV-vergoeding). All together, you get quite some money, but keep in mind that you are going on trips, eating out, going out, etc. so for me even this was not enough to cover the costs but if you pay attention to your expenses it can definitely be sufficient.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)

At the Université Paul Valéry , you have several faculties, they call it "UFR". You're supposed to follow 75% of all your courses in one UFR. I don't know if I got that 75%, but I follow a lot of my courses from the UFR 2 : langues et cultures étrangères. You can't find any course descriptions online or at the university itself, so you will have to follow all of the courses you think are interesting in in the first couple of weeks. That was the actual advice the erasmus counselor gave us. After the first three or maybe four weeks, you'll have to have your definite schedule and you can get all the paperwork done (make changes in Learning Agreement, get the autographs, etc.). Pay attention to the fact that there are a lot of courses for which you can only get 2 or 3 ECTS. That means you'll have to follow way more courses than in Utrecht. I had 9 classes for example. The plus side was the fact that we barely got any homework. The downside was the fact that at the end of the semester, you had to study 15 weeks of content for 9 courses and the exams were all in one week, some people had 3 or 4 exams in one day.

academic quality of education activities

The courses I followed were mostly introduction courses. The academic quality was okay for some classes, but not really high for most of them. We didn't have to write any papers or do research. Most of it was just plain studying facts. This could be due to the fact that the courses were introductory, but I doubt it. Also, some of the teachers were not that good. 90% of them had never heard of powerpoints, there were no books from which we could learn, we only had to listen and write. Which was sometimes quite difficult because it was all in French and some teachers talk with an accent or really fast.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

This was organised pretty good. There were students from the university who received us, they did the paperwork and made the student cards for us and answered our questions. In the first three or four weeks their office was open every day so you could go ask questions or advice about anything. After the first few weeks, their office was opened once a week. There was also the international office from the university, where you could go if you had troubles with classes or if you needed an autograph for any of the documents needed. I have a good experience when it comes to the counselling and support at Paul Valéry.

transfer of credits

I only just finished my last assignment, which had some delay due to miscommunication so I still have to transfer the credits.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

Montpellier - Université Paul Valéry 3

There were some meetings at the university for the Erasmus students. You could meet other students or just go there and get the information you needed. There was also ESN, which was really nice because they organised parties and other events for the Erasmus students which was really cool.
accommodation
I stayed at a campus. My campus was fine because it was cheap (244 euros a month) but it was not that cosy and I barely had any interaction with other students. They were trying to make an effort to change that though. There were movie nights and soccer tournaments and a halloween party etc. It depends on what effort you make to make friends at your campus and you've got to have some luck with your "house".
leisure & culture
I love Montpellier the city. You don't even have to do anything special there, just walk through the streets, visit the shops, have lunch or dinner in any of the cute restaurants or relax in the park. There is a beach at 13 km, but I only visited it once because it wasn't easy to get there with trams and busses. Also, going out is great. There are several cool bars with cheap mojitos, shots or "special" beer and some clubs that stay open until 7 am. Because there are so many young people and students, there is always life at night in the city. There are also a lot of cultural events : expositions, wine tastings, the christmas market, culinary markets, montpellier en lumières, etc. Also, the atmosphere is so relaxed, anything and anyone is accepted. There are a lot of street artists who make music or do tricks, dance groups, acrobature, anything. It's a really stimulating environment if you are a creative person or if you just want to enjoy the sun and like going out a lot.
suggestions/tips
I really loved it there, so I suggest you should go to Montpellier!

CONCLUSIONS

would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain
Yes, I would. The classes may not have been the best, but I thought it was interesting and a really good experience to have followed courses at another university for once. Also, it's so good for your personal development and you get to make friends from all over the world. For me, it was a great experience and I wouldn't have want to miss it.
do you have any additional advice or comments?

2015-2016Report 1

faculty/college	Humanities
level	bachelor's
name study programme	French language & culture

PREPARATION

exchange application process

Montpellier - Université Paul Valéry 3

When I decided to go study abroad, I made an application via OSIRIS. I did it very early so it got accepted and it went smoothly from there on. I went the second semester of 2016, I heard some people say that they got denied for the first semester due to lack of places at the university of Montpellier.

counseling & support at Utrecht University

The UU-staff was incredibly helpful. They responded elaborately in every mail trying to make sure all the problems were solved. There was a meeting with all students that were planning to go study abroad where the UU-counselors informed us about all the aspects of studying abroad, where we received a helpful booklet. A teacher from Utrecht also made time in her schedule for me to discuss my departure to France.

academic preparation

I guess studying in Utrecht gives you a good academic preparation. In Montpellier it wasn't as academic in comparison with Utrecht. I learned that it was a public university, sponsored by the government which isn't equally qualified as, for instance, a "Grande Ecole" (private university). Nonetheless, some teachers really make an effort to aide you during the courses.

language preparation

As indicated above, I study French language and culture in at Utrecht University. This implies that I was already well prepared for studying in France. I heard that some students from UU followed some French courses as preparation that I already followed in my first academic year. I also worked on a camp-side in the Provence the summer prior to my departure. Lastly, the mandatory language test (send by Erasmus) indicated that my French was on a good level.

finances

The amount that was given as a Erasmus scholarship was sufficient. Housing in Montpellier is relatively cheap (at least comparing to Utrecht/Amsterdam). I paid approximately 180 euro a month because I applied for a CAF (French company for housing benefit). The room I got ascribed to was alright, it had everything you need (including own shower & toilet) but it wasn't spacious. Nonetheless, I found the shops to be relatively expensive (food etc.) but with some smart shopping you would be able to manage.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organizational issues)

There is a great variety of courses available so you will find something that will suit you. I choose other courses when I got there because some did not exist or weren't accessible for me. But they give you the time and space to figure it out. Note that the overview of the courses that are offered in Montpellier aren't presented as orderly as Utrecht does. You need to take time to spit through the website of Paul-Valery. Also, the schedules of the courses is mostly presented on the door of the classroom or in buildings.

academic quality of education activities

Montpellier - Université Paul Valéry 3

Montpellier wasn't as academic compared to Utrecht. I learned that it was a public university, sponsored by the government which isn't equally qualified as, for instance, a "Grande Ecole" (private university). Nonetheless, some teachers really make an effort to aide you during the courses. Some courses also involve doing some research and learning various methodologies, so it was alright.

counseling & support at receiving university abroad

The Erasmusdesk received me good, informing me and explaining anything when needed. They had an office on the campus with always someone to talk to. They also always send you emails to keep you informed well.

transfer of credits

Did not happen yet.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

Unluckily I couldn't attend to the welcome & orientation programme due to overlapping university schedules. I needed to finish courses in Utrecht that were important for my graduation. Nevertheless, the Erasmusdesk send me an email with the PowerPoint. The Erasmusdesk also received me good, informing me and explaining anything when needed.

accommodation

I lived in the studentaccomodation "La Voie Domitienne", which is near the University. There were a lot more studentaccomodations, each one containing in general 8 buildings. So there is a lot available. I also saw people (including students from Utrecht) that had found a private housing, sharing an apartment with other students. Which is very good to practice your language skills. On Facebook you will be able to get in touch with people renting a room in Montpellier.

leisure & culture

Montpellier is a vibrant city containing a lot of curiosities like restaurants, bars, clubs, museums and theaters. The beach is also accessible from the city-center by tram. And last but not least, France has a lot of other cities near Montpellier that are really worth to visit.

suggestions/tips

A good tip is the PassCulture, you should get one right when you get there. A fee is demanded in the beginning but you'll get a major discount out of it because every ticket you'll buy for a cultural event will cost 5 euros (instead of 20 euros sometimes). The beach is also good accessible. Lastly, train-tickets for 1 euro (there is a website called like that) that you need to book 3 weeks in advance. That way you can visit Nîmes, Sète or Avignon for only 2 euros aller-retour.

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CONCLUSIONS
would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain
I do, Montpellier is a great city for students. I came across people from various countries (mostly Europe but also outside). Most international students tend to speak French with one another which I found very surprising. I was told that English usually dominates, but not in France. There were a lot of fun activities and I was always amazed by how well the city has been set up. The French people are also very helpful, in and outside of the university. There is a great variety of courses available so you will find something that will suit you. In Montpellier you really have the space to grow as an individual.
do you have any additional advice or comments?
Really make sure you do the paperwork for the scholarship correctly.

Report 2

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

PREPARATION
exchange application process
The exchange application process did take some time, but everything is explained really clearly and whenever I needed help figuring something out I could always contact the international office or my home university to ask for additional information.
counselling & support at Utrecht University
The University Utrecht has a great international office that will reply quickly to any questions, and when some things were still unclear to me I even had the opportunity of making an appointment so that I could sit down with someone and really go through all of the questions I still had and make sure everything was clear to me afterwards.
academic preparation
On an academic level the preparation was quite easy for me. I made one appointment with my study advisor as to how to fit in my semester abroad into my studyplanning, but once that was arranged it was all good. For me, since I incorporated all the courses I was taking abroad in my 'profielingsruimte', I did not have to follow certain courses or replace courses of the University Utrecht, so that made things easier for me.
language preparation
Language wise, I didn't really need to prepare myself for my exchange since I had already stayed in France for one year so I was quite comfortable with the language. Even though, it will never hurt to do some preparation, since for some of my Dutch friends in Montpellier the language was quite an obstacle, especially in the first like month or so.
finances
Regarding my finances, I had saved up quite a big amount of money, around 600 euros, to pay for my trip going there and for my living situation in the first months. The Erasmus Grant is really helpful but arrived for me quite

Montpellier - Université Paul Valéry 3

late, so I used my own money I had saved up to buy myself new stuff for in my dorm room, my plane tickets, etc. I would definitely recommend people to have some money saved up themselves to be able to pay all of the expenses you will have especially in the first month of your stay, when you are setting up.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)

My study programme was somewhat different from the normal courses I follow in Holland, since I wasn't allowed to follow courses from my own study. This was however not at all a problem for me since it allowed me to follow different courses and explore other angles. I for example took a course in Photoshop and a course in Journalisme, which were way more practical than the courses in Holland but therefore really nice and interesting, because I liked the practical aspect of them.

academic quality of education activities

Since a lot of the courses I followed in Montpellier were a bit more practical than I was used to, I think the courses to me were easier than the courses I normally follow in Holland. I guess this will greatly depend on the courses to choose to follow, but for me this was the case for most of my courses. I really liked them, but I did feel that the academic level was lower as the courses I normally follow in Holland. I have to say that this might also have to do with the fact that some of the courses I followed in Montpellier were second year courses while in Holland I am already in my third year.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

The support at the receiving institution was good. There is an Erasmus office open everyday in case of any questions, and you can also always contact them by mail on which they replied really quickly. Also, at the beginning of the semestre they had a welcoming reunion in which they explained all of the import information, which was very helpful and a great way to already meet a lot of the Erasmus students of our university.

transfer of credits

As far as credits go I have not yet received my transcript of records, but for me all of the courses I have followed in Montpellier have been accepted to bring into my studyplan in Utrecht. This means for me that all of the ECTS that I earned in Montpellier will be part of my bachelors diploma.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

As far as the student life in Montpellier goes, there is a great organisation, ESN Montpellier, that organises plenty of different activities for the incoming exchange students. In one of the first weeks they organised the 'welcome week', for all the newly arrived students. This week was full of activities such as a guided tour around town, lots of parties, an international diner, etc. This week was really good to meet new people and to get to know the city a bit more.

accommodation

For accomodation, I was in a cité universitaire, so in university residence, and I actually really liked that. I had a small 9 square metre room with my own bathroom and a shared kitchen on my floor. The rent was really low and you can also apply for CAF which is great. The room was small but really practical, and since you are not going to be spending a lot of time in your room a small room will do. What could be really nice as well would be to have (french) roommates, but that is harder to find and definitely more expensive.

leisure & culture

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Montpellier is a great city when it comes down to things to do and cultural activities. Even though the town is not very big it is very vibrant because of it's huge student population. Besides the bars and restaurant there is also plenty of musea, expositions, sport activities etc.

suggestions/tips

I would highly recommend anyone who is thinking about doing an exchange semestre to go to Montpellier, especially if you are thinking about doing a semestre in France. For me Montpellier was the perfect size, not to big and definetely not to small, the weather is great, the beach is nearby, there are always so many things to do and the population is almost only students and a lot of internationals.

CONCLUSIONS

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

I would highly recommend anyone who is thinking about doing an exchange semestre to go to Montpellier, especially if you are thinking about doing a semestre in France. For me Montpellier was the perfect size, not to big and definetely not to small, the weather is great, the beach is nearby, there are always so many things to do and the population is almost only students and a lot of internationals.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

No not really.

2014 – 2015**Report 1**

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

PREPARATION

exchange application process

For my exchange application I had to send out a request to the University of Utrecht on the fifteenth of Januari in 2014. This request had to be submitted on Osiris. This request included a study plan, with the courses I wanted to take in Montpellier, a financial plan, with the receipts and expenditure I was planning to make in Montpellier , a Proof of Language Proficiency, which in my case was French B2 (approved by professor Mme Ammouche), a motivation letter and my resumé. The study plan had to be filled in for different universities, I took Paris as my third choice, Lyon as my 2nd choice and Montpellier as my first choice. My intention was to earn 21-30 ECTS with my study abroad and I wanted to go to France from the 1st of September (2014) untill the 19th of December (2014). All this information above had to be submitted on Osiris. On the 3rd of March I got an email that I was accepted to study abroad at the University of Montpellier (Université Paul-Valéry III). After this email I wrote an email to my host University in Montpellier about the application process at their University. I had to send out my studyplan and another Language Proficiency form for their administration so that they could accept me at their University. After this was settled, I had to send out my candidacy, my Learning Agreement (signed by the University of Utrecht and the University of Montpellier), my notes from my courses that I took before at the University of Utrecht and a form for my accomodation in Montpellier. After they accepted all the forms, I received an email with the name of my coordinator in Montpellier. I also had to send out a copy of my ID card, two passport photographs and a copie of my CEAM (Carte Européenne d'Assurance Médicale) card. I also had to

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<p>pay 5,10 for their fees for the "student life" at the University. After the International Office in Montpellier accepted my request to study at their University, I received an email with my student number in Montpellier and informations about my arrival at the University. They also gave me the access to ENT (their digital schoolplatform). With this email my application for the exchange was completed. Since the University in Montpellier did somehow not receive my passport photographs, I had to give them the photos on my first arrival in Montpellier. With these photos my inscription at the Université Paul-Valéry III was officially completed.</p>
<p>counselling & support at Utrecht University</p>
<p>Before I decided to go to Montpellier I spoke with my tutor about going abroad. He told me that it would certainly be a great experience and something that would look good on my resumé. I also spoke with Madame Ammouche, the contact person for going abroad from the French department at Utrecht University. She helped me with searching the courses I wanted to take. I also went to the pre-departure meeting organised by the International Office of Utrecht University, which was very helpful since they told us all about studying abroad, including how to obtain the Erasmus + grant. They also send out a document with all the information that they discussed at the meeting. Another form of support from Utrecht University is that they send out emails with reminders about the Erasmus Grant, these emails were very helpful. I also asked a few students who went to Montpellier before about Montpellier and they helped me out with a lot of things (how to find the University, the courses, etcetera).</p>
<p>academic preparation</p>
<p>I did not do any academic preparation for my study abroad, besides the research that I did on the different courses I would want to take.</p>
<p>language preparation</p>
<p>I did not do extra language preparation for my study abroad. I assumed that my French that I learned in the past two years at Utrecht University and the years before that at my secondary school were sufficient for my study abroad in France.</p>
<p>finances</p>
<p>In the past three years I saved money to go abroad, I worked at different places to save some money. I had saved enough money to study in Montpellier. I did not take a job in Montpellier since I saved enough money to finance my study abroad. In total, I've spend around 2500 euros, including the college tuition fees (1900 euros) and including the extra money I got from the government (OV compensation and my student grant).</p>

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

<p>study programme (content and organisational issues)</p>
<p>Back in Utrecht I already chose eight different courses that I wanted to take at the University in Montpellier. These eight courses corresponded with 33 ECTS in total. When I arrived in Montpellier, the courses that I wanted to take were mostly not available in the first semestre. Some of the courses did not exist anymore. My information was based on an old document on the website of the University of Montpellier, so the courses on the website did not correspond with the courses that were available from september 2014 until december 2014. I had to change my courses and therefore I visited different information meetings of different departments. I wrote down the courses that gained my interest during these meetings and after I had found a few courses of my interest I went searching for them on the website of the University of Montpellier. This time it was easier to find them since I already received the different codes for the courses. The most difficult thing to do was to fit all these courses into a functional timetable. In Montpellier they do not work with timeslots so I had to look up all the different hours for all the different courses. This took up a lot of time. After a lot of changing in my timetable, I managed to create a functional timetable. The first week it was still possible to change your courses since you did not have to do your official inscriptions for the exams yet. It was really</p>

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difficult for me to understand their system, but I finally figured it out. The first week (2 september - 9 september) was to do your inscription for the University (something I already did by email, which I found out later) and to attend different information meetings for the courses you would want to take. The second week was to try out your timetable to see if it was functional and to see if these were really the courses you would like to take. This was a little hard to understand, since all the courses started already with compulsory subject matters for the exams. So if you did not like the course, and if you would switch to another, you would have missed already the beginning of the course. Luckily my courses were all very interesting. Only one course seemed to be a bit unnecessary for me so I canceled that course. I only took classes in the 1st year in France, since I was afraid I would not be able to have the required knowledge to follow second year courses.

academic quality of education activities

There was a difference between the academic quality of the different courses. The academic quality during the courses was as it should be, the teachers were academic and highly educated. Although the quality of the exams was in my opinion a bit doubtful. I studied hard for the exams, the way I always did at Utrecht University, but the questions on the exams were far from what I expected. For instance, with several courses I completely understood a definition of a specific subject and was perfectly able to explain the definition but then on the exam there was for example a phrase with a date, a writer, an idea and a book where this idea was published in, all in one sentence, and then we had to say if the phrase was right or wrong. So there were four things that could be right or wrong and they were all about tiny details in all the work we had to study. I do not believe that this is a very academic way of testing our competences and knowledge. We only had one exam for every course and every exam had questions like these. We did have to make several exercises (bookstudies etc. for Modern Greek literature for example), but we never had to hand in any of these exercises for a note. The final note was only based on the final exam.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

In Montpellier the International Office was there for us to receive us at the University. There were several students to help us as well. The University of Montpellier also gave us a contact person, but I only saw her twice, since she was very busy and we had to make an appointment to speak with her. Most of the information I obtained from my teachers, most of them were willing to help me out with the questions I had

transfer of credits

I passed all the courses in Montpellier but the University in Utrecht still have to receive the Transcript of Records from the University in Montpellier. The amount of ECTS that we got for a course was different than we got for the courses in Utrecht. The courses were never 7.5 ECTS, always less, so that is why I chose more courses. In total I chose courses for 32 ECTS, in case I might fail a course.

STUDENT LIFE**welcome & orientation programme**

As said above, the first week was to orientate on the courses you would like to take in Montpellier. There were flyers everywhere at the University saying that you should do your inscriptions at the International Office. Due to a lack of computers in their administration section, we had to wait 4 hours in line to get signed in at the University. The University did not do a lot about welcoming the students or explaining what to do next. I always had to ask the students that were already there. On Friday there finally was an Erasmus reunion where they told us the things we had to do (although it were the things I had already been doing the past week): visiting courses, do the inscriptions. I think it was a bit bizarre that they did this reunion on Friday since the classes would already start the second week. There was also the student organisation ESN who planned a lot of activities in the first week (ESN Welcome Week), so that we could meet all the other International students. For

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me, the ESN activities were more useful than the few activities at the University, since I was able to ask a lot of students how they were coping with the inscriptions etcetera.
accommodation
It was really difficult to find accomodation in Montpellier (I spend three months searching for a room), since all the University residences were somehow already full. That is why I searched on Google for Dutch people in Montpellier, luckily I found a man who was living there and was renting his room for 350 euros (which was quite reasonable, since the house was extraordinary luxe). The man worked during the day so I had the whole house for myself including a kitchen, a washing machine and two roof gardens. I could walk to the city center in 10 minutes so it was the perfect spot to live. I was very lucky to have an accomodation like this.
leisure & culture
When I was not studying I was planning day trips with my friends in Montpellier. In the first weeks we visited a lot of cities in the weekends and we went to see all the cultural places in the surroundings of Montpellier (Carcassonne, Lyon, Toulouse, Sète, Nîmes, Barcelone, Aigues-Mortes). The student organisation ESN organised a lot of activities as well, and if I was able to make it I always participated at these activities. It was great to get in contact with this many cultures and the ESN organisation was perfect for getting to know this many different people from all over the world.
suggestions/tips
I would certainly suggest to get in contact with the French people as well (students in your class etcetera), I think it was easier to get in contact with the international students, since they all have the same intention of being in France, but for me it was also a challenge to get to know the French people a bit more. I was really motivated to get to know the French people and their cultures and I did succeed in getting to know a few of them, but it was harder to get in contact with them as it was with the International students. So I would certainly recommend to put some effort in getting in contact with French people, especially when you are studying French Language and Culture like me. Another tip is to not stress out in the first two weeks, I was warned for the first weeks that I got there but still it was really stressful!

CONCLUSIONS

would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain
I would recommend this university to others since they have a great offer of courses that you can take. For me they had everything that I wanted to study abroad. I do not think that the University in Montpellier is the best University as far as administration goes, but I believe that is something that a lot of French Universities are dealing with. The city is perfect for students, since there are a lot of other students that are very willingly to help you!
do you have any additional advice or comments?
I would certainly recommend, especially when you are studying a language and its culture, to study abroad. It has been a great experience and I have learned more than I had ever imagined.

Report 2

faculty/college	humanities
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	French language and culture

Montpellier - Université Paul Valéry 3

PREPARATION
exchange application process
<p>First of all, we had to send out a request to our own University (UU). This request included a financial plan, a study plan, a Proof of Language Proficiency and my motivation letter. My Proof of Language Proficiency was signed by mme. Ammouche at the level B2. My intention was to follow several courses at the university of Montpellier for 30 ECTS. It was not easy to find some interesting courses on the internet. And as it seemed: that courses were not the real courses finally given at the university in the first semestre. I wanted to stay abroad from the 1st of september untill the 19th of december. I uploaded my request on Osiris and after a month, I received an e-mail that I was accepted to study abroad in Montpellier (Paul-Valéry). After the acceptance, I had to send out an other studyplan, a language proficiency, my notes of my first and second year at University and my Learning Agreement. All these documents had to be signed by the sending institution (UU). I also send a demand for a room at the University campus. But they did not accept this request, I don't know why. After they accepted all the forms, I received an email with the name of my coordinator in Montpellier. I also had to send out a copy of my ID card, two passport photographs and a copie of my CEAM (Carte Européenne d'Assurance Médicale) card. These documents were necesairy for the administration of the host university. I also had to find a room for those four months. Finally, I asked a French lady and I could live in het appartement.</p>
counselling & support at Utrecht University
<p>Before I decided to go to Montpellier I spoke with mme. Ammouche about going abroad. She know's a lot about staying abroad in French. I could not attend the pre-departure meeting organised by the International Office of Utrecht University, but my friend told me that is was vert helpful and she gave the most important information. The support of UU was very good and usefull. They send several reminders for all the things we had to plan and to do. They signed all the papers, even while I was having my vacation on a Grec Isle and I could not come over to hand in the forms. I am very thankfull for their help. They also aswerded all the questions I had as soon as possible. Finally, I spoke a few students who had stayed in Montpellier too. They gave me a lot of helpful information.</p>
academic preparation
Nothing special
language preparation
Nothing but all the courses the last two years at the University
finances
I saved some extra money, I worked during the summer, but I expected to obtain the Erasmus grant so I did nothing special.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD
study programme (content and organisational issues)
<p>During the period to prepare my exchange, I choose several courses. But, a lit of those courses were not given in the first semester of 2014, or the courses did not exist. So I had to make a new study plan. This was not easy at all, we had to chose courses for 30 ECTS but you cannot compare the courses at UU with the courses over there. You can get for exemple 2, 3, 6 or 9 ECTS for a cours. So I had to fix my own schedule, and you have to be aware of the time tables, the ECTS etcetera. Finally, I [...] a little bit of every thing. Just an orientation in several subjects like psychologie, sociologie, portugese, history, music</p>

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academic quality of education activities
Not so good, actually: it was not so academic. The examens were like secondary school examens, lot of details were asked and you were not forced to think on a high level/academic level. So that was deceptive. There was not much interaction between the teacher and student, sometimes, the prof was just sitting behind his table and dictation a cours. and then, all student were copying what he said. For me, that is an absolutely difficult way of attending courses.. we had nearly nothing to prepare at home, there were no books obliged to use for the courses, you just had to be there and listen. The only exception was the 'WC/TD' of culture of anglophone countries on Thursday. We had to hand in our excercises, but even there, handing in your stuff was optional. So you were not forced in any way to prepare or do something. That was a pity. Every week, I was one of the ten students who handed in something. What's more: no modern programs or something like that were used during courses, compared to Utrecht, it really was old-fashioned. So that's why I appreciate everything, back here again in Utrecht.
counselling & support at receiving university abroad
It was OK, you could ask your question at the teacher and there was a coordinatrice, but she did hanrdly nothing but signing your papers if she was there. The possibility to ask your question at the 'bureau Erasmus' was good, they were very helpfully. But, in the beginning, when I arrived at the University, I had to wait so long for my administrational documents and my study pass, my codes to have acces to the digital environment and to registrate for the courses.
transfer of credits
OK

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme
Like I just said, the first week was a litte bit choatic. We had to wait for hours in the queue for our inscription and the teachers and the people at the International Office gave us different information about doing your inscriptions. So that was really confusing. At the end of the week, there was a reunion where we were told what to do. But that was already at the end of the week and the courses would start the next mondag. So, we just had to go to the courses to check if it was interesting for you. And after the second week, I got my pass and my codes, so from that moment on, you can registrate for your courses, which was too late already. The welcome and orientation programme was confusing, I had to ask a lot of students around me and finally, everything turned out to be OK. The welcome programme of the international student exchange organisation (ESN) was very warm. They organised a lot of activities to know each other better and to discover the city.
accommodation
I fixed my own accomodation. Because the campus was not an option for me, I don't know why but I didn't get a room on a campus. So, I lived with a French lady. This was a very nove experience to improve my French and to learn more about the real French life and culture. I paid €360 for my accomodation, food included. So that was not so expensive.
leisure & culture
We got a lot of time to spend at the beach or in the city. I had not much work to do, as a result: I got a lot of time spending with friends and so on. The discovery of the French life and culture was amazing. A lot of activities were arranged by the Erasmus network, so if you wanted to take part in any activity, that was possible.
suggestions/tips

Montpellier - Université Paul Valéry 3

The organisation of all the administrative stuff was too bad. But that is a tip for the University Paul-Valéry.

CONCLUSIONS

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

Not that university in Montpellier maybe, because the administration was very frustrating, but the destination was perfect.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

Thank you all for your help, at the international office UU!