

**2016-2017**  
**Report 1**

faculty/college	Dutch language and culture
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	Internship Dutch as a Foreign Language

destination city & country	Poznan, Poland
name university abroad	Adam Mickiewicz University
start date	13 / 02 / 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!

<b>PREPARATION</b>	
exchange application process	<p>You should really take your time for doing the application and keep all your papers in an organized place, to make sure you don't forget anything. Start in time and be at the same time patient: the staff at Adam Mickiewicz University (AMU) and their Erasmus office sometimes really take their time. The application site of AMU was also not very up to date. Application for the summer semester was announced to be opened on November 1<sup>st</sup>, but in fact I had to send 3 e-mails and finally on November 14<sup>th</sup> I was able to do my application. When I mailed them with questions about application, accomodation or time tables, the most heard answer was 'It's too early, you should wait'. When you are used to the Dutch system, things can be really frustrating in Poland, because everything will be organized and will be clear at the very last moment.</p>
counselling & support at Utrecht University	<p>The support at Utrecht University was much better. The International Office was very helpful and also quick in responding their e-mails and giving you what you asked for.</p>
academic preparation	<p>Besides studying I was also going to teach a course at AMU. Therefore I had to prepare 15 classes, each week 2 hours. I had to create a whole new class, so that was my academic preparation. I didn't do any preparation for the classes I was going to attend in Poznan.</p>
language preparation	<p>Erasmus sent me a link to do an English Language test, which result was satisfying. I tried to learn some Polish with the app Duolingo, which helped me a little - When I arrived I already knew some basic words, phrases and verbs.</p>
finances	<p>Poland is a cheap country. I did some extra jobs before I left to earn some more money, to make sure I wouldn't get in financial troubles during my stay in Poznan.</p>

<b>STUDY ABROAD PERIOD</b>	
study programme (content and organisational issues)	

**Poland – Adam Mickiewicz University**

In my application I already had to fill in the courses I wanted to do at AMU. AMU had a special offer of courses for international students, called the AMU-PIE offer. These courses are all in English. I chose a few courses from that list and filled them in at my Learning Agreement, but I didn't know the timetables of these courses. I had therefore no idea if I was able to attend these courses. Just a few days before the Summer Semester started, the time tables of the courses were visible online. At AMU you can attend as many courses as you want in the first 2 weeks of the semester, and at the beginning of week 3 you should at last decide which courses you want to attend the rest of the semester. I attended several courses in the first two weeks, and then decided which courses I wanted to attend the rest of the semester. It turned out that these were not the same courses as the ones I filled in at my Learning Agreement, but luckily that was no problem. Just make sure that you update a Updated Learning Agreement when you know which courses you are officially going to attend. You also have to register for the courses at USOS web, the kind of Polish Osiris. Sometimes this happened just automatically, but otherwise the Erasmus Coordinator at AMU is able to fix this.

## academic quality of education activities

In my opinion the courses that I did at AMU were very easy, maybe even too easy. I never studied at home for my courses, I just attended classes, listened and participated in some discussions, and that was enough. This can differ per course. Some courses of the AMU-PIE offer are just created 'for fun' by the professor. Since everybody can attend these courses, you don't need foreknowledge about the subjects. One of my other courses turned out to be a master course for Classical Philology students, so then the foreknowledge of each student can be very different.

I spent much more time at preparing the class I was teaching, and all the other things you have to do when you are a teacher - making exercises, examine them, etc.

## counselling &amp; support at receiving university abroad

I found out very soon that people are pretty bad in communicating here. In The Netherlands we are used to a clear and forward way of thinking and communicating in time, especially when it's in a big company like an university. Well, don't expect that from the people here. Lot's of last minute communication (for example about nationale holidays or other free days) was daily food here.

## transfer of credits

At the end of the semester you need your professors to write your grade on an Examination Card, in case they don't upload your grade in time to USOS (the Polish Osiris). You also need a Transcript of Records, to send to the UU. My Erasmus coordinator sent us an e-mail about that and asked us to come to her office with this Examination Card, so that she could make a Transcript of Records. I expected that this was just a few minutes work, but it turned out it took here a whole week. So, once again: you have to find out a lot on your own, and be very patient.

**STUDENT LIFE**

## welcome &amp; orientation programme

Before I arrived in Poznan, I already got an e-mail from my ESN buddy: a Polish student which is linked to you to help you whenever and wherever you need help. She was incredibly useful for me, since there were lot's of things that I had no idea how it worked here. She helped me with getting my student card, finding my Erasmus coordinator, fixing a public transportation card and so on and on. ESN (Erasmus Student Network) also organized an Orientation Week for all Erasmus (or other exchange) students. This was a week full of parties, meetings and excursions. Make sure you attend at least some of these events, because it helps you find other new people! Since everybody is new and nobody knows anybody, it's very easy to meet new people and make new friends.

## accommodation

**Poland – Adam Mickiewicz University**

The accommodation which AMU provides in one of their university dorms is very cheap (100€ a month), but since it were only double rooms, I decided not to live there. I found out (when I was still in the Netherlands) that there is this flat, Polonez Poznan, which used to be a hotel but is since a few years also a kind of university dorm. In this flats were single rooms available, so I booked a room there. It is much more expensive than a room in the university dorm (250€ - 300€), so you have to decide for yourself if it's worth the price. The flat is full of international students, and I enjoyed my stay there. Rooms are clean and furnished with some IKEA stuff, and each room has his own nicely renovated bathroom. You share two kitchens with your whole floor.

leisure & culture

Since Poland is such a cheap country according to the Netherlands, you can do a lot of things and most of them are pretty cheap. For example: visit all Poznans musea (which are a lot), eat in all the nice and cheap restaurants (which are even more) and go visit all the other beautiful cities in Poland (Gdansk, Warsawa, Wroclaw, Krakow). As a student you get 51% discount on train tickets, so long distance trips are pretty cheap.

suggestions/tips

Don't spend the whole semester in your room, it's a great opportunity to explore another country and culture!

## CONCLUSIONS

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

I would recommend Poznan because it is a nice and cheap city, and the ESN people really try their best to make your stay as nice as possible. If you are looking for a great university with high quality of education, I am afraid you have to choose another destination abroad.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

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## 2015-2016

### Report 1

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

## PREPARATION

exchange application process

The application process for UAM itself was a bit stressful, because some of the forms I needed were not immediately available. The application website is very clear and completely in English, but it was annoying that I was basically applying for courses that I would not enroll in - there was barely any information about the winter semester during the application process in spring. Furthermore, it was not very convenient that the official Erasmus documents weren't available yet when the application process started; I know that that is something that probably isn't going to change anytime soon, so be prepared to wait for the official documents or decide to use an old version first.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

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The international office has been very helpful during my application process, especially because it was kinda hard to prepare a Learning Agreement - there wasn't that much information available about the courses in Poland, as it is common that the definitive programme isn't published until a month before the semester begins, and with me being on of the first students actually going to Poznan, my situation was quite new for the International Office as well. They did their very best to guide me and whenever I had a question, I would receive an answer to my e-mails relatively quickly. The office hours were a godsend - it was very relieving to hear that it was completely normal to be struggling with the paperwork.

## academic preparation

My academic preparation consisted of preparing myself for my internship at the Dutch department, but it wasn't until september before I finally knew what was going to happen exactly. So in the end, there wasn't that much preparation; I tried to improve my academic English somehow, but I was mostly concerned with preparing for the master's thesis that I would have to write after my stay abroad.

## language preparation

I did not focus on language preparation, because my English was already at a sufficient level and I was planning on enrolling in a Polish language course at the university in Poznan. In the end that did not work out, unfortunately, so I ended up not learning that much Polish. I wish I had because it is such a weird language when you are used to studying French and Spanish in high school, not like anything you have heard before.

## finances

I knew that Poland would be very cheap, so I didn't do anything in particular to prepare myself financially. If you get placed in a student dorm, your room will only cost you about 125 euros; a semester ticket for the public transportation is about 32 euros; 15 GB of internet for my phone cost me 7,50 and you probably won't spend more than 150-200 euros on groceries/eating out each month.

**STUDY ABROAD PERIOD**

## study programme (content and organisational issues)

You have to arrange a lot when you arrive, because it is very possible that you won't be able to sort out your study programme until that moment. I did not have that many problems with figuring out which classes I wanted to take, but unfortunately UAM doesn't have a proper functioning course catalogue - so I had to do a lot of research on different webpages to find courses that suited my master programme. The faculty of English is pretty well organised and the international office knows how to help you, but I found myself e-mailing a lot of people to make sure that I was indeed allowed to choose the courses I wanted.

## academic quality of education activities

This is a problem, because there were huge differences between the courses I took and it is hard to compare a Polish University with my own Utrecht master's programme, because I think that we are used to a higher level. While I found my classes pretty interesting, my internship at the Dutch Department was most challenging and valuable for me. It really depends on the teacher how academic the content of the class is, and I do think that the language barrier is a problem for a lot of teachers: don't be surprised if a teacher struggles with speaking English. When selecting classes, aim as high as you can and try to choose as much as you can from the same master's programme (Intercultural Communication for example); this is a nice way to ensure yourself with 'classmates' and a schedule without any overlapping classes.

## counselling &amp; support at receiving university abroad

The coordinator of the English faculty is very nice and helpful, and she kept in touch with us during the semester. I found it very interesting that we had to pay for our student's card and that it was necessary to do this payment at an actual bank - I collected my card within the first couple of days of my stay, but I've heard

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stories of people having to wait forever until they received one. The thing is, generally speaking UAM is less organized than UU, which means you will have to figure out a lot on your own and get to deal with teachers who don't show up because they didn't feel like teaching (I was lucky, but it happens) - but the international office is willing to help you and patiently replies to your numerous e-mails. In my case it turned out that the coordinator wasn't able to register me for the courses I followed at the faculty of Social Sciences, and while that stressed my out at first - she didn't realize that minor detail until week 2 or 3 - I was able to fix that problem with a couple of e-mails to the guy handling the registration system for Social Sciences. Basically it is you asking all/ a lot of the questions because the support you will get lacks a kind of 'how does this university work' programme for dummies. For example, nobody will explain where you can print your assignments or where the libraries are and which rules apply to them, or how you are able to find out what the course abbreviations in the schedules mean - unless you ask. I didn't have as much classes as other people and while I have felt lost at some points, it was still okay, but I can imagine that this can be very frustrating when you have to enroll in more classes.

**transfer of credits**

You will need to arrange a lot of paperwork in order to get your transcript of records; loads of signatures and certificates from different teachers, which can be a bit frustrating. The Polish educational system works with different grades; while UAM uses ECTS just as Utrecht does, they work with a grading scale from 1 to 5 - 5 being the highest and comparable with an A. Be prepared for the issues this is going to cause when you head back home - a lot of the final grades are based on just one assignment, which makes it impossible to ask for a percentage grade as well, and in 1 particular case I found it very frustrating that just one mistake made on an exam made my grade drop from a 5 to a 4. After transferring your credits, you will probably end up with a grade that is closer to the bottomline of the grading categories - a 5 can be anything from an 8.5 to a 10. As of now I do not know how my own grades will be transferred exactly, so that is still something I am a bit worried about.

**STUDENT LIFE****welcome & orientation programme**

ESN is quite active in Poznan and organises an extensive orientation week, so that was a nice experience! A highlight of the inauguration day (for everyone, I guess) were the huge tables filled with typical Polish sandwiches and sweets, and a lot was arranged for us; the buddy programme works quite good and we received a Polish simcard on our first day.

**accommodation**

The student dorms are very cheap, but do not expect anything fancy. I stayed in Jowita, which cost about 125 euro each month, but the building was quite old and I did not have a proper kitchen. The location was brilliant though, very central and close to the railway station. They are currently renovating some of the floors, so it might be better in the future, but if you do not get selected for a University dorm you can also arrange one yourself or try to find an apartment in the city - which is not hard at all, there are more than enough rooms available because there are quite a lot of Erasmus students moving out each semester.

**leisure & culture**

Poznan is very beautiful and has a lot to offer culture wise. There are a lot of cheap (4-5 euros for a ticket) cinema's, museums, loads of restaurants and nice parks and lakes to go for a stroll. Poland is famous for wodka, and the Poznan nightlife is filled with it. It was very cool to see the cultural differences regarding going out and experience the madness that is Pijalnia - a bar that serves shots and beer/soda for 1 euro and 'small' snacks for 2 euros. As to travelling to other cities, Poznan isn't the most central city, but it is quite easy to travel to Warsaw and Gdansk by train for example. It will just take a lot of time, but that is something you will get used

**Poland – Adam Mickiewicz University**

to after a couple of weeks; distances in Poland are way bigger than in the Netherlands and travelling 2/3 hours by train is nothing. Train tickets have a huge student discount as well, so it really is a nice way to explore the country. If you want to visit Auschwitz, you'll be travelling to Krakow for about 6 hours, where you can catch a bus that takes another 60 minutes. Quite a long trip, but definitely worth it; the war history of Poland is intriguing and a visit to Auschwitz is a surreal and overwhelming experience you shouldn't miss out on.

## suggestions/tips

There is a huge Erasmus/English speaking community in Poznan, so try to get involved with those people as much as you can. Besides the activities organised by ESN, there are plenty of other events and parties. Also, enjoy the fact that stores are open from 9 to 21 every single day and that having dinner at a foodcourt in one of the malls might be cheaper than cooking yourself. Eating out is so inexpensive that it would be insane to stay away from the restaurants and cafes - you can get yourself a proper meal and a drink for 5 euros or less; if you decide to spend 10 euros, you will have a very luxurious meal.

**CONCLUSIONS**

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

I would, but with the consideration that the level of the courses varies greatly, so try to aim for master courses if you don't want to be surprised with a class that is too easy. The faculty of English is very well organized, but I think that the faculty of Social Sciences offers the most interesting programme. The AMU-PIE programme has a lot to offer and I really think that UAM knows how to handle the English aspect of Erasmus. My internship was a very special opportunity and it was nice to be able to combine teaching with following classes. I would especially recommend UAM because the academic culture is so different from ours - you don't really go there because of the academic level, but it is amazing to experience an environment that is completely incomparable with the Dutch situation. You get to know a culture that is still recovering from many years of war and communism, and I really liked that. Of course, Poland is extremely cheap, and it would be weird not to mention that as a huge benefit.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

- getting stuff done in Poland can be frustrating, because the University is not as 'strict' as you're used to. Try to adapt the Polish mentality - don't care too much and keep explaining them that you really need the description of a course when it is not available on the website.
- libraries do not have printers; printing is done at special copy shops spread across the university. Very weird for Dutch people, but kinda cool
- the Polish educational environment is very hierarchical. This is hard to get used to, because (if you are a master student) you probably call your own teachers by their first names. Don't do that in Poland - communication by e-mail is very formal (always use titles!) and you will never see a teacher signing of an e-mail with just his first name. Strangely enough, it is completely acceptable to walk outside in the middle of a class without asking, but that is because of the fact that most teachers don't do coffeekbreaks.
- if you will be staying in one of the student dorms, prepare yourself for the fact that you probably won't have any kitchen supplies - Jowita only had two ovens in the whole building, which were always occupied by big groups of students. Buy your stuff at IKEA and bring some forks/knives/spoons from home - until a stay abroad you probably have never realized that cutlery sets for one person do not exist. I didn't bring cutlery (my parents ended up sending me what I needed), but I did bring an internet cable and a multiple socket box and that was very convenient.