



UU Report form - 2016-2017

University of Washington, Seattle

preparation
exchange/placement application process
Once I made the decision that I wanted to attend the University of Washington in Seattle (UW), the application process went pretty smooth.
counselling/support at home university
The international office is very helpful and is always willing to help.
academic preparation
Academic preparation was actually not really necessary.
language preparation
When your English isn't bad, you will be perfectly fine. The professors also take into account that not all students have English as a first language.
Finances
Living in Seattle is not cheap. Rent is expensive, as well as groceries. I paid 850 dollars for a room in the University district.
study/placement abroad period
study programme/work plan (concerning content and organisational issues)
You will not know which courses you'll be taking, until you get to Seattle. Make sure you know which courses you want to take before meeting with the counselor who will subscribe you into those classes. I e-mailed in advance and asked if they could hold a spot on the courses that I really wanted to take.
academic quality of education/placement activities
Professors are very involved with their students. Most courses that I took were 'skill-courses', like negotiation and counseling. The academic quality of these courses is very high. The level of other courses is lower than the level of the UU.
counselling/support at host institution/organisation
The support that you get at the University of Washington is great. They are very willing to help you out with whatever problem.
transfer of credits



The grades that I got are not showing on my diploma, something I am really disappointed in.
student life
welcome/orientation programme
Perfect. They ask you to arrive a few days in advance/ In those days they give you some presentations to inform you of everything that you have to do. They also give you the opportunity to meet other students, which is really nice. Attend FIUTS events, that is how I met all my friends.
Accommodation
Finding accommodation is not easy. I would recommend going on Facebook to find a room. I would not stay in a dorm, since it is too expensive in my opinion. Everybody that I knew lived in the University District.
leisure/culture
People from Seattle are very friendly and helpful. It is a very nice area to live in. I had the best time there and I'm sure that you will too.
suggestions/tips
If you have the choice, don't go in the winter quarter but in the spring. The weather will be much nicer.
Conclusions
would you recommend this host organisation/destination to others? please explain
Yes, very much. The University of Washington is an excellent school and the campus is amazing. Seattle is a great environment for those who love nature.
do you have any additional advice or comments?
Please feel free to contact me if you want to talk about studying in Seattle.



2012-2013

From September 2012 till March 2012, I had the pleasure of studying at the University of Washington School of Law (UW). Although Seattle is infamous for its rain during this season, the city and the people itself definitely make up for it. Also the UW has one of the better law programs on the U.S. West Coast. Furthermore, the University of Washington is one of the few U.S. partner universities offering the opportunity for master degree students to go on a foreign exchange. If you are thinking about studying in the U.S., the University of Washington is definitely worthwhile to look into.

Before leaving

If you are selected for the University of Washington, make sure that you start early with your preparations. Selection by Utrecht University does not automatically mean that you are enrolled at the UW. You need to apply separately for that. Go to <http://admit.washington.edu/Admission/International> to find the current application deadline. If you encounter any difficulties, you can try to contact, either our international office or Dana Raigrodski, who is the coordinator for the exchange students at the UW. Once you are admitted to the UW, you can go to the website of the International Student Service (<http://iss.washington.edu/>) to see what else needs to be done prior to your arrival. A couple of these are listed below.

Visa

Before leaving for the U.S., you must obtain a F-1 student Visa at the American Consulate in Amsterdam. The process includes filling out an online form and a visit to the consulate. Personally, I had no trouble filling out these forms, but be sure to start early with your application as you are required to provide a lot of information. Once you have completed the form and sent it, you will be invited to come over at the consulate. Be sure to reserve a whole morning for this, as you will be doing a lot of waiting. However, the consulate staff is, generally, very friendly and helpful, which makes the wait a lot easier.

Finances

In general, America is slightly more expensive than the Netherlands, especially with regard to groceries and housing. To obtain your visa, you are required to show that you are able to take care of yourself during your stay. For a six-month period you need about \$10,000. This excludes additional expenses such as flight tickets (\pm €800 – 1000), fees related to your visa application (\pm €200) and textbooks (\pm €400).

TOEFL

Students from the UU, generally, are not required to pass a TOEFL exam. In my case, I had to submit a declaration of English proficiency by the international office. To be sure, check with Dana Raigrodski.

Insurance

The UW requires all its students to have medical insurance coverage, which is provided by the university. If your current insurance policy covers these expenses for your stay in the U.S., you can apply for an insurance waiver. Be sure to apply in time, otherwise you are automatically enrolled in the UW insurance policy and are required to pay for an expensive premium. Although I have been told that proof of insurance, in English is required, I've never been asked to provide any.

Measles Immunity

When you apply for the UW, you are required to provide proof of vaccination against measles. Dutch students can obtain this by contacting the RIVM.

The study

The level of education at the University of Washington is excellent, but challenging. Because the United States does not offer law as an undergraduate degree, all courses are graduate level. Active participation is expected. Like in other U.S. law schools, most big classes credit their students based upon a curve system. This means that only a certain percentage of the students can receive a certain mark. For instance, 10% can receive an A, 20% a B and 30% a C and the rest is divided by the teacher. This means that your work is graded relative to the other students. However, the class teachers are excellent and will provide you with any help you need. They are very approachable and always willing to receive you into their office in case you need extra help. You can find all courses in the course catalog on the UW Law School website <https://www.law.washington.edu/CourseCatalog/>. You can, again, check with the exchange coordinator, ms. Raigrodski, to see whether the courses you are interested in are suitable for international students.

The University of Washington offers so much more than study alone. All students receive (upon payment of \$87) a public transportation card, comparable with the Dutch OV card, which allows you to freely travel on the Seattle public transportation system. Furthermore, as a student, you are entitled to use the UW's big gym facility, the IMA, where you can participate in a broad variety of sports, and all the other leisure facilities, which you can find in the Husky Union Building (HUB).

Welcome and stay

Before arriving in Seattle, you will receive information from the Foundation for International Understanding Through Students (FIUTS) (<http://fiuts.org/>). This organization helps newly arrived international students with their orientation at the UW. Besides offering an introduction week, the organization offers students the opportunity to participate in the "home stay program." During this program, you will stay the first week of your arrival at the place of an American host. These hosts will guide and support you to settle in the U.S. and often



long after that. I can recommend everyone going to the UW, to apply to participate in this program as it has made my life here so much easier and helped me to a whole lot of new friends.

One of the most important things to orienteer for, prior to your arrival, is housing. The University of Washington has a couple of resident halls, which are available for international students. I do, however, not recommend to apply for one of these, as they are far more expensive than off campus housing and all its residents are obliged to vacate their rooms during break periods. I recommend everyone coming here to find a place on the craigslist (craigslist.org). Good neighborhoods to look for are the University District, Capitol Hill (best neighborhood to go out); Fremont (also very good) or Ravenna (close to the U-district). If you are accepted to participate in the home stay program, you can also wait looking for a house until your arrival.

Leisure/ Culture

Seattle is known in the U.S. as a very liberal city. It has large LGBTQ and hipster community, especially in the area known as Capitol Hill, and offers a large variety of cultural activities, such as art walks and museums. Seattle is also known for its large number of coffeeshops, which, unlike in the Netherlands, are small places that serve a wide variety of coffee. Nightlife is, generally, confined to Capitol Hill, Fremont, Ballard and Belltown. The U-district itself also has a small selection of bars, but most of the parties there are held inside houses. Be aware that the age limit for drinking alcohol and visiting bars in the U.S. is 21, which is strictly enforced. Always carry you ID with you, If you do not have any, you will not be allowed to enter bars and clubs. You can acquire a Washington state ID at the Department for Motor Vehicles. (DMV). Seattle also offers a lot of cultural activities. Most of these can easily be found at the city's website. A couple of tips are, Gasworks Park and Lake Union, the EMP and Pike Place Market. You will find that every neighborhood in Seattle has its own culture and it is worthwhile to pay a visit to every one of them during your stay. Also people who love outdoor sports will certainly not be disappointed. Students who rather like to watch a game, will find that they receive a big discount on tickets on matches of Seattle's sport teams.

Traveling

If you are planning on driving a car in the U.S., make sure to purchase an international drivers license before your departure. People with a Dutch drivers license can purchase one for €15,- at the ANWB. If your planning on travelling to nearby Canada, or any other country outside the U.S., be sure to get permission from the ISS.

I hope you find this short outline useful, as you are orienteering for your exchange. There is, of course, so much more to say about Seattle and the University of Washington, but most of it you will find out along the way. Go visit the website of the FIUTS (FIUTS.org) if you're looking for more information.



2010-2011

I had the pleasure and privilege to study at the University of Washington in Seattle for 6 months (Jan-Jun). The best months of the year to experience a city like Seattle in my opinion. Whilst it is gloomy and rainy all the time during the fall, it is great to see the cherry trees blossom in the spring after a chilly but still gentle winter and enjoy the sunny days during summer! Mind you, it is not sunny every day but when the sun does come out, it shines like there is no tomorrow!

Preparation

If you got selected for the exchange program: congratulations! My advice: start as soon as possible with your preparation. You cannot start early enough for a study abroad, especially one in the U.S.! A checklist helped me tremendously with this.

Insurance

Request a confirmation of insurance letter from your home insurance company. Make sure the letter is in English and that they state the coverage is against the costs price (if that is the case, of course). With this, you can get a waiver for the mandatory University of Washington's health insurance which is very expensive. Search for the Insurance Waiver Request Form on the University of Washington website. Most insurance companies cover your abroad study for a maximum period of six months. If you are planning to spend some extra time here before or after the exchange (to travel etc.) make sure you have additional coverage for that period too.

English Proficiency Statement

University of Washington does not require a TOEFL test (at least, it was not mandatory when I applied but check with the International Office just to be sure). You can request an English Proficiency Statement at the International Office and submit this together with your application to the University.

Finances

Studying in the States is expensive, so you need to prove that you are able to take care of yourself while you are there. Request a solvency statement from your bank in English. You need at least \$10.000 for a period of 6 months. Ask for information at the International Office regarding this. Back pocket some money too for additional expenses such as the flight ticket (varies depending on the season, book early for the best price), visa application (\pm €130), the SEVIS fee (\pm €170) and text books during your study in the States.

Study abroad



The quality of the education provided is excellent. The professors are very passionate and knowledgeable. The course load is much more than in The Netherlands, you will most likely have class every day. You can look into the courses before you go and provide a list of your preference but the final decision will be made with the abroad coordinator at the Law School. She can advise you which courses are more suited to your interests/curriculum and whether the subject matter is relevant for international students, as some of the courses are rather State Law oriented rather than federal or international orientated. If you are planning to transfer credits, plan accordingly as the Master's programme require you to receive permission before you go study abroad.

Public transportation is important if you do not have a driver's license and/or a car at your disposal. You receive a student's card (Husky Card) from the Law School before you start classes. When you receive your Husky card, you can request a U-pass, which is basically a sticker you put on your Husky card that gives you the right to use (most of) the public transit. This is similar to our 'studenten OV kaart', the costs are \$99 per quarter. Last time I checked, they were planning to incorporate a chip for the U-pass (just like our 'OV chipkaart'), so check the UW website for the most recent developments.

Student life

Welcome/orientation

The FIUTS (<http://www.fiuts.washington.edu/>) is an international student's organization that provides a (semi-mandatory) introduction at the beginning of the quarter. Check whether you are able to go or that you have classes at the same time. It is mandatory as far as the coverage fee that you need to pay; there is no penalty if you do not show up due to overlapping classes (as in my case). They also organize a lot of trips as well. Be aware that the Law School has an attending policy of 80% (so if you miss 3 out of 10 classes, you are forced to drop the course and that might bring your visa in jeopardy because you have to have at least 12 credits per quarter for the F-visa).

Accommodation

As this is probably your first visit to Seattle as a student, you do not know which neighbourhoods are nice and which are, well, not so nice. University of Washington has its own district (University District or as they say it in Seattle: the U-district). The University does provide housing options which I recommend you to explore. It is conveniently close to the Law School (within walking distance). If you choose to find housing on your own you should try craigslist.com or <http://housing.asuw.org/>.

Leisure/culture

Nightlife in the States is not as exciting as it is in The Netherlands, so be prepared for that. This does not mean you are condemned to boring nights as a couch potato. The only bar -besides the house parties, which are fun- I found that was nearly as fun as any random Dutch bar was the Acquabar –yes, it is really spelled this way- in Belltown. For instance, there were moderate drunk people on the dance floor instead of just lounging (means sitting at the bar getting not so moderately drunk)! So there are pretty good places to enjoy yourself but you have to look rather hard and also have a little luck I guess. Nightlife starts very early and ends early as well (around 10 pm to 2 am). One tip: always have your ID with you. If you don't, you are not able to enter the bars and clubs (even when you are not planning on drinking). It is also convenient to have as most of the stores ask for an ID if you purchase something. It happened to me several times in a clothing store. Another thing that could come in handy is to acquire a Washington state ID instead of carrying your passport all the time for day to day activities. Ask the International Students Service how to apply for this.

Recommendations

As far as touristy activities, the first place to explore is the UW campus. It's beautiful! Visit Pike Place Market to see the fish throwing and visit the very first Starbucks but get



your Frappuccino elsewhere (there is always a ridiculously long line), go to Alki Beach to see the sunset and the amazing postcard worthy skyline of Seattle (well, they actually do use this view on postcards), eat conveyor belt sushi at Marinepolis Sushiland in Queen Anne, go up in the Space Needle at night (but do not eat at the restaurant, overpriced and the food is moderate), for the best view of the city go to the Bank of America tower in downtown on a sunny day, it's the highest building of Seattle and you get to pay the students price of merely \$3! Visit a Mariners Game, eat a hotdog and drink a beer while you are at it. Take a clipper to Victoria (Canada, so get your travel permission from your ISS advisor before you go), visit the Seattle Art Museum (free on a particular weekday), do a ride the ducks tour, visit Green Lake on a summer day, see the Fremont Troll in –how surprising- the Fremont district. Taste the best hot chocolate at Seattle's Best Coffee (never ordered the coffee though but it must be the best as well). Don't forget to visit Discovery Park and Gasworks Park too. As you can see, Seattle is a versatile city. I consider it to be a fractal (if you're not into maths google it). There is always more and more beautiful stuff to see and to discover! Final tip: always tip 15-20% of the total bill when eating out! The last thing you want is for Americans to think Dutch people are stingy!