



UU Report form - Erasmus 2017-2018

faculty/college	Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	Social Science; Sociology
destination city & country	Joensuu, Finland
name university abroad	University of Eastern Finland
start date	02 / 09 / 2017 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	18 / 05 / 2018 (dd/mm/yyyy)

PREPARATION

exchange application process

It was a long process. First the application, especially the letter of motivation was important. Further I found the whole process bureaucratic but that is of course necessary when you would apply for a grant. It gave me sometimes some irritations, but is all part of the long period of applying and in the end all the patience is more than worth.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

I talked with the Mastercoördinator for advice.

academic preparation

None

language preparation

None

finances

Well, this is an interesting topic because Finland is quite an expensive country to live. The housing prices are low, for student housing in Joensuu around 200 euro, but the living expenses were so high that I had to ask my parents for some financial funding. I did a lot of research beforehand so I would expect that already and talked already beforehand with my parents about it. The Erasmus grant was useful, I was disappointed that I did not get it for the whole study period.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)

In the study programme there occurred some organisational issues. Some of the courses were not given, next to that were some courses not what I expected. The teachers were not so able to give good lectures, it depended a lot on the individual qualification of the teachers. I think a reason for the differentiation and fluctuation in the level of the lessons are created by the different backgrounds of the teachers. For example I got a course from a professor from Africa, Turkey, Arabia, Finland, Canada, Belgium, Poland, etc. Of course different backgrounds can explain the diversity in teaching methods, nevertheless I would suggest that the department have to pay attention that the level of the courses are still on a certain level. In my opinion the level of the courses differentiated a lot. In general the content is good, but some master courses are more on the level of bachelor courses at the Utrecht University. Some bachelor courses are not compatible with bachelor courses of



the Utrecht University
academic quality of education activities
Like I said already above, it was divers. In general I would say that the level is lower than in the Netherlands. The Mastercourses are more our Bachelorlevel (like third years course). I had to write for example an essay from 10 pages. In Finland the requires at the university are different than in the Netherlands. That is not so strange because the Finnish Society works different. People are different and have a different culture. It is in my eyes obvious that the university require a different level. For example there is a big focus on participation in the lectures because finnish people are in general not so talkative and it is good that they develop that to can work later on in a job where they need to be a short of communicative.
counselling & support at receiving university abroad
I had some problems with my courses, because some were not given in the end. The department coordinator and some teacher thought with the international students about solutions for the create situation. They felt really sorry for us. So in the end they created for example an extra course that could be followed. They made it also possible to gain some point by following seminars and write about it papers (normally it was only for finnish students, but after I talked with a teacher they made it also possible for internationals to follow them and made the essay). In my experience that shows that the university is still working on its internationality and that shows good will in my eyes, to made the university more accessible for international students.
transfer of credits
Good, it was good organized

STUDENT LIFE
welcome & orientation programme
Good a lot of information in three days, as expected. The tutors where not so able to help the new students I heard a lot of negative stories from other internationals. I helped trained the new tutors, but it is always the question of Finnish students will do it better a next time. They can have different motivation to help internationals, they could for example only do it for money or the credis that they get, so then they can not do there best for the internationals.
accommodation
Not so good. The accommodation is organized by a organisation that is not helping students at all. They have a monopoly in the market and are thinking about there own financial benefits. That is not so nice, esspecially not for international students, who come in a new and chaotic environment.
leisure & culture
The sportfacilities are amazing and really cheap. Finns really like sports. Everywhere you can buy sport materials and esspecially wintersports. The musea are nice to visit but not so accessible for english speakers. There are a lot of cultural things to do in Joensuu, but the languagebarrier can make it hard to participate in it.
suggestions/tips
I would say to every international student come to Finland. I was so surprised about what this country have to offer. I went to Joensuu, in the middle of nowhere, but it was an incredible experience. I met so many nice people from all over the world, where the most of them became good friends. Finland has an absolutely breaftaking nature with some idyllic landscapes. This studyyear, I was the whole year involved by the ESN Board, where I started as a event coordinator. In the second semester I became president and get more involved on the national level of the ESN. We organized wonderfull activities and I learned how to function in a non-profit organisation and how it is to talk the lead. Next to that I improved my English, increased my scientific knowledge, learned a lot from other internationals by intercultural exchange, I made good friends for the rest of my life and finally felt in love with an Italian girl. So if I speak honestly I would everyone suggest



to take the step and be brave to step out your confort zone to cross borders. I'm really glad that the Utrecht University gave me the chance to have this experiences and I hope that other students would have the possible in participate in the erasmusproject as well.

CONCLUSIONS

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

Yes, the university is in development and expecially in Social Sience they improved in one year a lot to increase the level of education and make the programm more for internationals. The university is good organized and it works.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

no.



UU Report form - Erasmus 2016-2017

faculty/college	Sociale Wetenschappen
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	Culturele Antropologie
destination city & country	Joensuu, Finland
name university abroad	University of Eastern Finland
start date	09 / 01 / 2017 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	28 / 04 / 2017 (dd/mm/yyyy)

PREPARATION

exchange application process
I originally applied for other universities which had too many applications which is why I applied for a left-over place in Joensuu. The application process was not really difficult, but I do recommend people to start looking at different universities early on.
counselling & support at Utrecht University
Support from Utrecht has been fine apart from the fact that the last documents were send too late which is why I didn't get the right documents signed in Joensuu before leaving.
academic preparation
There was no academic preparation needed.
language preparation
As language preparation I took the test needed for the Erasmus grant. Once in Joensuu I chose to do a Survival Finnish course.
finances
Finland is a more expensive country, however my rent was cheaper than in Utrecht. Groceries and specifically alcohol and fruit/vegetables are more expensive. Within the university you can borrow books from the library and you can print up to 400 pages for free which means you don't have any costs for studying.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)
I mostly took sociology courses in Joensuu. The topics were interesting such as gender, migration, racism and globalization but I didn't find the teaching adequate enough. In my opinion I learn way more in Utrecht since we mostly discussed our own opinions and compared worldviews. I didn't have to read that much and as a result I felt like the classes were not that scientifically based.
academic quality of education activities
As mentioned previously I don't think the academic quality is good enough. For some courses I barely had to do anything besides following the lectures to get 5 credits but another course required a paper, presentation and exam with three books and 40 articles for 5 credits of which it was not clear what we did need to read and what we didn't.
counselling & support at receiving university abroad



Finns are really short and straight to the point so when I emailed lecturers I usually only got a one word reply, I however didn't have any big problems and they did provide help when I needed to get more credits for a specific course.

transfer of credits

I didn't do this yet so I don't know how they will transfer my credits.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

The first week we had a orientation programme to start and understand Moodle, Weboodi and other usefull materials. However some people already had classes this week which is why some couldn't attend. For the orientation you could receive 1ECTS but I don't think this will be accepted by our university. Some of the information was usefull but mostly it was kind of common sense and a bit boring.

accommodation

I lived in Latolankatu which is a studentcomplex with many international students and Finnish students. There are also families living in these buildings which might be annoying with parties and children crying. I bought a bike and it took my a little less than half an hour to cycle to the university, the bus takes around 20/25 minutes.

leisure & culture

I enrolled in Sykettä which has sportsclasses all week round, there normal fitness room is not that good though. I enjoyed taking several spinning, zumba and other classes. For going out there are mostly two clubs - one with students nights on Wednesday and Sunday and the other with parties on Friday with an entrance fee. Other fun activities were going to Polar Bear (ice swimming and sauna) and I was in the board of ESN for the semester with fun activities.

suggestions/tips

Join ESN activities, make new friends to hang out with both in the city but also at home because there's not that much to do in Joensuu itself.

CONCLUSIONS

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

Not necessarily, in my opinion the courses are better in Utrecht and also the city is not that lively. However it is a really different experience because of the cold, the quiteness and the beautiful nature around.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

Take lots of warm clothes, rent a survival package from the student office (ISYY) and visit beautiful places such as Lapland and St. Petersburg.



UU Report form - Erasmus 2014-2015

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

destination city & country	Joensuu, Finland
name university abroad	University of Eastern Finland
start date	01 / 09 / 2014 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	20 / 12 / 2014 (dd/mm/yyyy)

PREPARATION

exchange application process

Everything you need to know about this can be found on the website of the international office of the faculty and of the university in general. I found this quite clear.

I would advice to start in time so you have enough time to make a good decision. Don't only look at destination, whether there are suitable courses is also important.

After Utrecht has accepted you the university responds quite fast and provides you with all the needed information. This is really complete.

It takes some time and some work but remember that it is really worth it!

counselling & support at Utrecht University

Quick answers from the International Office, especially when you asked something through email.

Not much support is needed when you have no problems with your application

Erasmus Grant application was extremely late which was very annoying. The international Office did try there best to help to fill in the form in time. During the exchange it was also possible to ask questions so no worries about that.

academic preparation

Not necessary (the level of education is a lot higher in Utrecht).

I would however advise to maybe take an extra course in Utrecht so you only have to take 22.5 credits (the minimum requirement for Erasmusgrant) so you have more time for traveling and partying.

language preparation

Finnish is impossible. People who have studied for more than 2 years still don't understand Finnish. Don't waste your time trying to master the language.

I did take a language course at the University in Finland however (Survival Finnish). The level is really low (the



teacher only talks about other stuff than the language) but it is extremely easy to pass (I still regret dropping it). It is fun to do this course so I would advice to do so.

finances

Finland is more expensive than the Netherlands but there are some ways to cut down your costs.

- First, use a bike instead of the bus (The bus is expensive and doesn't go after 8 p.m.). This is really common in Joensuu en saves a lot of money. Rent a bike (this is possible at several places) so you don't have to pay for fixing the bike.

- Second, eat at the cafeteria of the university. The price of a warm lunch is 2,35 euros including salad, bread and drinks. This is a lot cheaper than groceries and everyone eats here. Lots of vegetarian and diet food available. You do have to pay the Student Union membership, but this is really worth it.

Prices of transportation, groceries and alcohol (especially alcohol, it is really expensive) are higher than in the Netherlands but on the other hand there are also things cheaper like rent (I paid 220 euros for a room of 22 m2 in a shared flat).

If you want to travel (if you do, buy cheaper alcohol in Estonia or Russia) and do fun things at your Erasmus (and I think everyone wants that) I would advise you to save some money. I used about 1000 euros on top of the incomes like the student grant, Erasmusgrant and transportation grant.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)

I mostly took courses in the field of Teacher education, Educational Sciences and Psychology.

The registration was quite easy (although WebOodi is the most horrible website ever). You do need to register in time because courses might get full. Pay attention to overlapp and attendance (however, you can usually arrange something with teachers if this occurs).

The semester only lasts less than 4 months, and most of my courses were in the first 2 months. I didn't have to take any exams, just essays. This depends on your courses however. There are very little lectures (some courses don't have lectures at all) and you therefore need to study a lot on your own or in a group.

Most deadlines are in November/December and therefore the beginning of the semester was very relaxed for everyone.

You can usually miss some lectures if you want to travel, but you need to arrange this with your teacher. Make sure to do this in time.

Finnish people are very practical, they help when you ask, but with nothing more than what you ask. Therefore make sure to ask everything you need to know.

academic quality of education activities

The quality was quite low compared to Utrecht. You didn't have to work very hard to get your credits (I easiliy got 30 credits in less than 4 months with traveling and partying all the time). Finland is not so strict on academic rules like APA and the quality of references. Your own opinion is quite important and it asked often in assignments.



Take some master courses if you want a bit a challenge, these are a little better (but still very easy).

When you take exams you can always retake them (unlimited amount of times) so most people go the first time just to check what the exam is like). A semester abroad is a good way to higher your average grade in this case.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

Like I said, Finnish are very practical. The necessary information is given but for the rest you have to find out yourself. Your tutor (a student that will help you with your arrival etc.) can help you. And also the student union is very helpful.

In the survival guide (a guide you get send home before the semester) you will find pretty much all the information you need. Finnish are friendly and very willing to help you. Also the different Facebookgroups (Erasmus Joensuu, ESN Joensuu etc.) are often used to ask for information about things.

transfer of credits

I haven't done this yet, but you should ask for a Transcript of Records and than it should all be oke.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

I arrived quite early, which gave me some chance to discover the city. I would however advice not to go too early, because not many people will be there. Some time before is usefull however. I got a lot of help from my tutor with arranging a lot of stuff for my room and with registrations at the university.

The welcome programme was for the most part quite useless if you had read the international students guide. It was however a nice way to meet some people. I skipped some days and had the feeling that I missed nothing. The city oriëntation is quite nice however, so I would recommend you to go there. Also the introduction to your faculty and the introduction on the first day are quite usefull.

accommodation

There are big problems with accommondation in Joensuu (only in autumn sememster). There are too little flats and therefore there was a big group homeless in the first month (they lived in a hotel).

Joensuu Elli (similar to the SSH) is the best and cheapest option. Most internationals live in the student flats of Elli. I would recommend renting from the 1st of August instead of 1st of September because that gives you a way bigger chance of getting a place. This way you should be able to find a place. Most flats of Elli are quite far away from the university/city centre (about 5-6 km) but since most students live there it would be the best place. Flats in the city centre are harder to get and a lot more expensive. Furnished rooms are easiest option.

leisure & culture

Joensuu is not a very big city so you have to organize some stuff yourself to enjoy. This is no problem however. There are a lot of clubs, like theatre, dancing (salsa), sports, boardgames etc. I sang at the choir of the university which was a lot of fun. People often organise dinners and parties at their place, which is also a way to spend your time. I would highly recommend to join ESN Joensuu, they organize a lot of parties, activies (dinners, music evenings etc.) and are responsible for organising trips. I was a board member and made some great friends in ESN.

Furthermore, travel! There are a lot of great places to visit. ESN organises trips to St. Petersburg, Stockholm and Lapland and I can recommend to join them because it is a cheap option to travel with all your friends. Furthermore Tallinn is a great place to visit. Lapland is an absolute must (it was one of the most amazing places I have ever visited).



In conclusion, lots of activities are organized. You can also party in the city centre but this is more expensive and are not very big clubs or something.

The culture is a bit independent. Finnish people are mostly shy and don't talk a lot to others (they are a bit distant). Most people do speak English, but won't talk to you unless you talk to them. However, once you get to be friends with Finnish people they are really reliable and loyal. It can be worth your investment. The Finnish Friend programme is a nice way to get to know some people, but not everyone had a close relationship with their Finnish friend. I met a lot of Finnish people in the choir, which is also a good option.

suggestions/tips

Just enjoy, it is really easy to make a lot of friends on Erasmus, so just make the best out of your time. Bring warm clothes and you will be fine.

CONCLUSIONS

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

I would definitely recommend it. The quality of education is not very high, but the student life is very good and there are great opportunities for travelling. I will never forget this experience and it was absolutely incredible.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

Don't be too scared by the cold. It is not so bad and by wearing some good clothes you will prevent yourself from getting cold. Take some vitamin D for the dark and just enjoy this unforgettable period of your life!