



## Universidad Autónoma de Madrid

2017-2018

<b>PREPARATION</b>	
exchange application process	My exchange application process went well. Everything was explained in e-mails I received from the International Office of Utrecht University. Therefore I knew exactly what I needed to do.
counselling & support at Utrecht University	Utrecht University supported me during the application process, by giving a presentation on what to expect during my stay abroad. This made me enthusiastic and therefore helped me deciding whether I wanted to go abroad. Furthermore, whenever I had questions I could always ask them. This was very helpful.
academic preparation	I did not do any academic preparations since my study (public administrations) was directly linked to the study in Madrid. The mandatory courses I did in Utrecht were also a academic preparation for the courses I did in Madrid.
language preparation	Before I went to Madrid I did a Spanish language course. This was very useful. However, my level of Spanish was not very high and this turned out to be problematic. I did not know that it was mandatory to do 25% of my courses in Spanish and my level of Spanish was not sufficient enough to be able to comply with this condition. I saw on the UU website that this condition is written more clearly now and I would recommend everyone who is considering to go to Universidad Autonoma to be actually able to do courses in Spanish.
finances	I saved some money and had a student loan. Besides I also received the Erasmus Grant. Keep in mind, though, that Madrid is not a cheap city if you compare it to other Spanish cities, such as Valencia. Food is not very expensive but housing, for example, is. My rent was €520 and compared to people that I met in Madrid, this price was quite normal.

<b>STUDY ABROAD PERIOD</b>	
study programme (content and organisational issues)	In the end I was (luckely) able to do all my courses in English. These courses where: Financial Crisis and States (3 ECTS), Geography of Population and Inequality (6 ECTS), Local Government and Politics (6 ECTS), The United States as a Global Power (6 ECTS), Emerging Human Rights (3 ECTS) and a Spanish Language Course at A2 level(4 ECTS). Again, I was lucky for doing all my courses in English, do not expect this to be possible!
academic quality of education activities	The academic quality of most of my courses was lower than I expected. The topics of the courses I choose where interesting to me, but on most of these topics we did not really go in depth. Therefore I also did not study that much.
counselling & support at receiving university abroad	



The support at my receiving university was good. The international office was open everyday for some hours and I could always e-mail them if I had a question. Things go in a 'Spanish' way, though. Which means that everything takes more time and that in general the university is not very structured.

transfer of credits

My credits are not transferred yet. It is taking very long and I am not satisfied on this point.

## STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

There was a welcome day, but furthermore there were not many activities.

accommodation

I rented a room in a studentflat in the centre of Madrid. My room was expensive, but the location was perfect and my roomies became my friends! In Madrid it is very common to have a cleaner once a week, which is nice.

leisure & culture

Madrid is an amazing city! The architecture is beautiful, the weather is nice, there are always people on the streets, there are many of nice restaurants, museums, bars, etc. I fell totally in love with the city! Madrid is also in the centre of Spain which makes it very easy to travel to other cities. I went for example to many of the small cities surrounding Madrid, but also to Valencia, Cordoba and Granada.

suggestions/tips

Just go! You'll love Madrid, for sure!

## CONCLUSIONS

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

I would definitely recommend Madrid as a destination to go to on exchange. The city is very nice and so are the people. However, the educational level is not very high, in my opinion, and it is needed to speak Spanish! For me everything was eventually fine, but I did struggle a lot with finding courses at the beginning, since my level of Spanish was not sufficient enough.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

Save enough money and learn how to speak Spanish at at least B2 level.

**2017-2018**

## PREPARATION

exchange application process

The exchange application process for the 'Universidad Autónoma Madrid' consists of a motivation letter, a Curriculum Vitae, a study plan, a financial plan and a language proficiency form. There are two available places for Governance students. The process consists of two steps. First, you have to be nominated as an Erasmus student by the Utrecht University and second, you have to be accepted as an Erasmus student by the Universidad Autónoma Madrid.

counselling & support at Utrecht University



The support at Utrecht University was fine. It was not really specific for the destination Spain, but they gave sufficient information about the process and general information about studying abroad.

academic preparation

It is not really necessary to do something for academic preparation. The education level in Spain is not as high as in Utrecht.

language preparation

I recommend to learn some Spanish before going to Spain. I followed Spanish at secondary school and took a language course from the moment I knew I was going to Spain. A lot of instructions are given in Spanish and they assume you have a basic level of Spanish. A lot of the communication, for example e-mails, is in Spanish. Their level of English is not that good. Besides, you are obliged to follow 25% of your courses in Spanish.

finances

I saved some money before my exchange. Spain is not really expensive, but the rent is quite high in Madrid. I also wanted to do a lot of trips to discover Spain (Madrid is exact in the middle of Spain, so it is perfect to visit many cities).

**STUDY ABROAD PERIOD**

study programme (content and organisational issues)

Besides you have to follow 25% of your courses in Spanish, you also have to follow 51% of your courses at your own faculty (in our case, the faculty of Law). They offer not many courses in English in political science, so you don't have a lot of choice if your Spanish is not really good. I decided to follow some courses at the Faculty of Philosophy and Letters (of the study International Relations). I followed the following courses: Emerging Human Rights (3 ECTS), Financial Crisis and States (3 ECTS), Politics and Local Government (6 ECTS), Geography of Population and Inequality (6 ECTS) and Teorías de la Democracia (6 ECTS). Financial Crisis and States and Emerging Human Rights are 'Asignaturas Transversales', so interdisciplinary courses. I also took a Spanish Language Course (4 ECTS). This course costs around €60 and then you get Spanish two times a week with approximately 25 other students.

academic quality of education activities

The academic quality of the education activities is not as high as in Utrecht. You have a lot of courses during the semester. You are obliged to attend almost all the classes. You also get a mark for your attendance. Because you have a lot of courses, you need to go to university more comparing it to Utrecht. I thought the lessons were not that inspiring. But, I would definitely recommend students to follow the course 'Financial Crisis and States', which I think is a challenging and interesting course. The lessons are not really interactive. But, if you attend the classes and prepare for your final exams, it is not very difficult to get good marks. During the semester, you don't have to study or read a lot. Although you have to attend many classes, you don't have to prepare a lot for the lessons. I would say that my level of Spanish was not high enough to follow my Spanish course. It was really helpful to improve my Spanish and to meet some Spanish students. In the end, I am glad that I followed the course. The exam wasn't that hard, but I also had to write two essays in Spanish which was actually too difficult for me.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

The international office is not really supporting. Their English is not very good, so it helps when you try to speak in Spanish. They do offer a buddy program which was I think really helpful. My buddy studied last year in Utrecht, so she knew a lot about the Utrecht University and helped me with my Spanish course. It also helped that she was working at the International Office. Also teachers assume that you have a basic level of Spanish.



Therefore, I would recommend you to choose 'optional courses'. They take more into account that you are an Erasmus student.

transfer of credits

I don't know how the results of my exam are converted by the examination committee. My results in Spain were quite high.

## STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

They organized a welcome programme and a tour around the campus, but this was in Spanish. Only some students who were helping were able to speak in English. For me this wasn't really a problem, I understood it well. This program was just informative and about the procedures to choose your subjects, schedules etc. Only ESN organized some informal activities, for example a welcome party.

accommodation

I found my accommodation via the organisation 'Uniplaces'. It was a well located room (city centre) in a student residence with other Spanish students. My room was part of the organization 'EASO Residencias de estudiantes'. I paid around €500 per month, which is an average price. In the beginning, it was quite hard to communicate with my roommates, because their English was really bad. But it was a really good way for me to practice my Spanish. It is possible to rent a room at the campus of the university, but I would definitely recommend you to look for a room in the city centre of Madrid. The campus is quite far away, around 20 minutes by train. So when you live at the campus, it is difficult to do a lot in Madrid, because the trains don't run during the night. It is not really easy to find a room in Madrid, because there are many international students. So if you don't already have a room before you go to Madrid, I recommend you to go one or two weeks before the start of the semester. Otherwise, it will be very difficult to find an available room.

leisure & culture

Madrid is the perfect destination to discover a lot of Spain. It's exactly in the middle of Spain. For €20 per month, you have a public transport card which is valid for the whole area. It is really

suggestions/tips

There are a lot of organizations which organize many things for international students, for example CityLife Madrid, BeMadrid and ESN. It is a good way to get in contact with other international students. So there is more than just ESN.

## CONCLUSIONS

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

Yes I do. Madrid is a great city. Besides, there are a lot of opportunities to travel through Spain. The subjects that I followed were not really hard, but I am glad I followed my course in Spanish. Although my level of Spanish wasn't that high, I achieved a sufficient mark. Madrid is a city with many international students, so you'll meet a lot of international students and have a lot of activities for international students where you can participate.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

It will be good if you have a basic knowledge of Spanish. A lot is explained and done in Spanish. Therefore, it is a really nice way to improve your level of Spanish.