



University of Lapland, Rovaniemi

2017-2018

PREPARATION	
exchange application process	
	The exchange application process was quite easy. The University of Lapland didn't ask for a lot of information. The only thing that stressed me out a little was the learning agreement that had to be signed by the University of Lapland. They took a very long summer holiday break and I therefore couldn't finish my application process before August. This also resulted in not receiving the Erasmus grant before my arrival to Rovaniemi, but I received it about a month after.
counselling & support at Utrecht University	
	The international office at Utrecht University was really helpful. They can send you signed documents through email if you are not able to visit them during the visiting hours and they can help with a lot of questions you may have. They respond normally quite fast if you email them. Once everything is arranged you are on your own though, they don't check up on you if everything worked out.
academic preparation	
	I did not need any academic preparation.
language preparation	
	A document from the University of Utrecht stating that your English level is good enough suffices.
finances	
	Finland is rather expensive, but student housing is really cheap in comparison. With your erasmus grant you can cover your rent (and maybe more depending on the type of housing you choose). Since groceries and leisure activities are more expensive it will be good to have some savings.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD	
study programme (content and organisational issues)	
	The study programme is different every semester and therefore very confusing. I had some trouble figuring out what courses I could take because a lot of courses were overlapping and I also needed my ECTS. Also, all the courses are normally only 4/5 ECTS so you will have to take more courses than you are used to in Utrecht. Be prepared that the courses you may choose in advance will not be available once you arrive. They do however offer enough (law) courses.
academic quality of education activities	
	Most of the lecturers are good but they are not always so interesting to listen to. Law courses are really different and for most of them you only have to attend a few lectures (usually only four or five but they are really long, 3/4 hours) and then you have to write a long essay. Some law courses also have moot courts.
counselling & support at receiving university abroad	
	The international office at the University of Lapland is very supportive. They are there for all of your questions and they also respond really fast if you email them. The university also offers counselling if needed, I don't have any experience with this though.
transfer of credits	



Shouldn't be that big of a problem. The international office will send you your transcript of records if you haven't received all your grades before you fly home.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

The welcome & orientation programme lasts four days and is mainly just listening to a lot of practical information. It is really useful to go there but not always that interesting. At the end of the week they organize an activity that is just meant to be fun and to get a bit of insight in Finnish (student) culture.

accommodation

Student housing by DAS is really cheap. The location of the buildings where the international (exchange) students stay in is outside of the city center but in 15-20 minutes by bike you are at the university and in 10-15 mins in the city center. The apartments of DAS are not pretty but they are fine for the money that you have to pay for them. You will have to buy everything yourself because DAS doesn't provide anything besides a bed/closet/desk. It is really fun to live with all the exchange students in two buildings next to each other though! You will never have to walk far if you want to hang out with a friend.

leisure & culture

The University of Lapland offers a sportspass that costs around 25 euros for a semester and then you can participate in a lot of sportive activities (gyms/group lessons/climbing/swimming/dance classes etc). You can also join the student choir or one of the many sport teams. The student housing is also located close to beautiful hiking areas and both cross country and downhill skiing are also possible. To get more acquainted with the Finnish culture you can participate in the Finnish Friend Programme and then the organization gets you in contact with either a Finnish family, student or just a Finnish person. They will tell more about this during the orientation week. ESN Lapland is also very active (especially in the beginning) and they organize lots of cool activities.

suggestions/tips

Save some money before you go! Students will organize trips to the north and ESN Lapland also organized several trips to for example Stockholm, Russia or northern Finland (Levi). Finland is really beautiful in all seasons so you will definitely want to see more of it. Also life in general is more expensive. Also, typical Finnish/Lappish activities (f.e. huskysledge rides/snowmobile tours) are really expensive.

CONCLUSIONS

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

Yes! I wouldn't go here if you really come for good law courses because then it might be a bit disappointing since it is a lot of self study and mainly just essay writing, but for the overall experience I would definitely recommend the University of Lapland. There's a really nice vibe in the university and it is also not as massive as universities here. The student life is very good and there are often parties, trips or other fun activities that you can participate in. Also, if you love snow and the wintertime this is definitely a beautiful place. And if this hasn't convinced you yet, you can also go and meet the real santa claus. ;)

do you have any additional advice or comments?

Don't doubt too much, just take the risk. It might be a bit scary but it is definitely worth it! I didn't know anybody when I went there but I met so many nice people there and I can say with certainty that moving to Rovaniemi and studying at the University of Lapland is the best choice I have made so far.



2014-2015

PREPARATION	
exchange application process	
	The application process is quite a lot of work but not hard to do. It is something you just have to do and can be done within 2 weeks. The part which was the most work for me was to make a financial plan because it is really hard to estimate the costs you're going to make. Another thing which you have to take into account is that all the documents need to be signed by the international office. Because there are very limited office hours it is quite hard to get your documents signed and big chances of lines during the office hours.
counselling & support at Utrecht University	
	Utrecht University was helpful as far as I needed help. When you have a question they really try to help you. However there are very limited office hours for the international office which can be a struggle when you're busy.
academic preparation	
	I didn't have or need special academic preparation. There only was a presentation from the UU about the process you go through when you're going abroad and how it all works. It was not that helpful except that it became clear that you always have to go to the international office when you want to get something done or when you're lost. It was good that they mentioned that studying abroad is not always fun and can be hard.
language preparation	
	I had no special language preparation
finances	
	By using the Studiefinanciering, Erasmus+ grant and the grant you get for your public transport you already get a lot of money each month. This means that borrowing money or getting money from your parents not necessarily a lot. I thought Finland would be really expensive but it is not that bad. The rent is relatively low and most groceries are a bit more expensive but not that much. If you want to travel around it is smart to have some money because this can get expensive.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD	
study programme (content and organisational issues)	
	The study programme is widely varied for exchange students. There is a lot of choice when it comes to courses in English in different faculties. When it comes to the organisation it is a bit chaotic. There are many courses on the internet which should be available but many of them turn out to be not available without any notice given to the students.
academic quality of education activities	
	The academic quality depends on the course you're taking. Some courses are just reading and repeating what you just have read. In other courses you have to write essays which are quite big (15-20 pages). The first way of examination doesn't have a high quality for me, the other manner does.
counselling & support at receiving university abroad	
	They are very nice and open to help you. They urge you to come to them when you have a question or something is wrong. However reaching professors can be really hard because they are out of town quite a lot, don't respond to their e-mails well and are not in their office when you need them.
transfer of credits	
	They have a clear system of giving credits although it is very different from the Dutch system. However it takes ages to get grades back. The professors have 4 weeks to check your exam and return credits. This can be



frustrating and annoying because the retake is usually within 4 weeks after you took the exam.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

It was a very nice and broad programme. They gave a lot of information and really tried to help you get used to the university and how it works

accommodation

The accommodation is arranged by DAS which is an individual organisation but it cooperates with the university. Therefore it is fairly easy to get a place to stay. You have to register at DAS and they will arrange an accommodation for you. All the exchange students are placed in two flats next to each other.

leisure & culture

There is a lot of opportunity to travel around in Rovaniemi. The study programme isn't that hard and renting a car is not very expensive. There are beautiful places to go to. At the university there are also quite a lot of opportunities to take courses about the Finnish, Nordic or Arctic culture.

suggestions/tips

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CONCLUSIONS

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

definitely. By going to this university you end up in a really nice and welcoming environment. Besides it is wonderful to end up in this special culture and different weather conditions.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

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University of Lapland, Rovaniemi

2014-2015

PREPARATION
exchange application process
I had to prepare a lot of stuff, but in the end it was worth it.
counselling & support at Utrecht University
Good. Our communications went smooth.
academic preparation
None, I just finished the first two years of my bachelor
language preparation
I took an English language course with JSVU, which was enough in my case.
finances
I took a higher loan and had a job in my summer holiday.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD
study programme (content and organisational issues)
I studied Law
academic quality of education activities
Unfortunately, more self study than my home University. Be sure to check before you go.
counselling & support at receiving university abroad
Good, there was also an International Office.
transfer of credits
They used the same credits method as my home University.

STUDENT LIFE
welcome & orientation programme
For all the students there was an orientation programme. It was quite nice. You got to see some typical Finish students habits, which was rather funny. You also get a tutor before you arrive. My tutor picked me up from the airport and brought me to my apartment.
accommodation
I lived in Kuntotie 3B. The apartments are quite old and not sound proof. However, they are OK and not dirty or something. Normally, exchange students party a lot so if you do not party or are done partying, be sure to bring ear plugs. It was also nice that all the students lived in the same area so you could easily go visit each other without having to go into the could on your bicycle. Notice that you do have a bed/mattress, desk, chair and a closet, but you have no sheets or kitchen stuff! I managed to get some kitchen stuff before we arrived by being a member on a Facebook group. A lot of other



students who leave put their stuff for sale/for free on Facebook, so check that out!
leisure & culture
I liked running in Kuntotie. The woods are nearby so I often went running in the morning.
suggestions/tips
I went to Kuntotie from sept-dec, which is a popular semester to go on abroad. Keep in mind that everybody, well almost everybody, wants to have a bike. I recommend that you should get a bike as soon as possible before everybody has bought one before you and there are no more in the secondhand shop. A new one is rather expensive! So quickly after arrival, go to the secondhand shop and buy one. Also, the supermarket are quite expensive, so I recommend you to go to Liddl, which is a bit farther than others but if you go there once a week than you will spare a lot of money. It is nice if you can bring warm clothes, but if you do not have them than do not buy them. There are a lot of secondhand shops in Rovaniemi and there is a lot of stuff which is quite nice and cheap. The coldest weather I had was 15- which was OK, because it is less humid than in the Netherlands. It therefore does not feel that cold. However, after the week I left the temperature went down to 20- until 30- which was, as a heard from my friends over there, quite cold. In the end of December you also do not have a lot of sunlight. The sun rises at around 11 am and goes under at around 2:15 pm. This is really strange and you really need to get used to this. In the beginning I wanted to make dinner, but then found out that it was only 3pm.

CONCLUSIONS

would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain
Yes, but be sure to find out if the courses that you want to take are lessons and not only self study. Also, the quality is lower than the University of Utrecht. Overall, I have to say that I liked my destination. I love nature and the woods where nearby and I made some nice friends. I do not think that the destination is important with an exchange, unless you go to an University with some typical courses/minor you like, but more the experience of an exchange.
do you have any additional advice or comments?
If you think about doing an exchange just go, YOLO!



University of Lapland, Rovaniemi

2010-2011

preparation

exchange/placement application process

I always had the idea to go on an exchange. So for that reason I decided to go to the information evening of the Utrecht University about the exchange possibilities. Before I went to the information evening I already made several choices for myself. For example it was important for me that the education was in English and I had the dream to go to a country I had never visited in my life before. During the information event of the Utrecht University I got in contact with a previous exchange student who went to Rovaniemi in Finland. She was very enthusiastic about this destination. And she was right! This destination had everything I was looking for. The education was in English and it was in a country I never visited before. So my choice was made. Rovaniemi in Finland it was! After the application process of writing a motivation letter and making a financial plan etc. I was selected to go to Rovaniemi.

counselling/support at home university

The counseling and support from the international office in Utrecht was perfect. Luckily I didn't have any problems in the application process and my exchange period abroad. Everything went very smooth. The staff of the international office in Utrecht informed me very well on all kinds of subjects you need to take care of while going on an exchange.

academic preparation

Before I went on my exchange I followed the Notarial route at the Utrecht University. In this Notarial route there is no opportunity to go on an exchange in your bachelor. But like I said before I always had the idea to go on an exchange. So I decided to go after finishing the Notarial route and take extra courses for my bachelor degree during my exchange period abroad.

language preparation

The language of education at the University of Lapland is English. In Utrecht there is the possibility to follow the course Legal English for Academic Purposes (LEAP). Although this course is very useful, it is not necessary to take this course. The Finnish language is however a very difficult one. Almost all the languages spoken in Europe belong to the same Indo-European family of languages. The Finnish language is a member of the Finno-Ugrian language family. The structure and vocabulary of Finnish differ greatly from the other languages spoken in Europe.

finances

In the brochure of the University of Lapland there is some information about the costs of living in Finland. They say it is about € 550,- / € 600,- a month to live in Rovaniemi. In my opinion this is right. In the beginning your expenses are a little bit more. For example it is useful to have a bike. You can buy a bike secondhand and sell the bike again when you leave. The University is about 30 minutes away from the student housing. For that reason it is good to have a bike. It also depends on how many trips you are going to make. If you are on an exchange you also want to see something from the country and the environment. These kind of trips can increase your expenses a little bit more.

study/placement abroad period

study programme/work plan (concerning content and organisational issues)

It is recommended that you have a study plan before arrival. But also keep in mind that the program at the University of Lapland is a very flexible one. It is possible that courses you have chosen before departure are not available at the time of your arrival in Finland. Luckily all teachers are very helpful with solving any kind of problems. I started with the course 'Introduction to the Arctic'. This course is about the environment of Lapland and its people who are living there. Personally I found this course really interesting and nice. And on top of that it also included a two-day excursion to a national park. Furthermore it is interesting to take some Finnish language courses. It is nice to know some Finnish



words and phrases.

academic quality of education/placement activities

The quality of the education at the University of Lapland is good. It is however not possible to compare this to the Utrecht University. The system of education at the University of Lapland is totally different compared to the system we have at the Utrecht University. It is for example normal to have lectures for about a week and after that you have to start self-study for the course. For some courses it is also possible to write an essay instead of making an exam. So as you can see there is a lot of freedom and independency given to the students.

counselling/support at host institution/organisation

The counseling and support at the University of Lapland is very good. The teachers and staff of the international office are very helpful. It is easy to get in contact with teachers and other staff by email. Everybody is responding very fast on your emails. What also helps is that the University of Lapland is relatively small. As an exchange student you also have a mentor. This mentor is a Finnish student. Your mentor is also there to help you with all kind of problems. And I was lucky to have a really great mentor, who now became a very good friend of mine!

transfer of credits

Unfortunately at the moment I can't tell much about the transfer of credits. This has not happened yet. But I do not expect any problems. Like I said before the application process also went very smooth. Everything is well organized, so for that reason I think I can expect my credits really soon.

student life

welcome/orientation programme

The University of Lapland and the student union organized an orientation program the week before the classes started. It was a great week!!! We got a lot of information about the system of study in the university and information about all kinds of other practical things. We also had a guided tour around the city of Rovaniemi and we were brought to Santa Claus in Santa's Village (Rovaniemi is the home of Santa Claus and you can visit him every single day on the Arctic Circle)! During this week there were of course a lot of freshman parties. It was also nice to get to know the other exchange students.

accommodation

I was really satisfied about the accommodation. I had a nice apartment with two other students. Everyone had his own room and we had a shared kitchen and a shared bathroom. In my opinion the apartment was really spacious. There were also a lot of facilities available, like a laundry room, a gym (if you like to sport) and even a sauna. I lived at the Kuntotie campus. This is where almost all the exchange students live. The Kuntotie campus is situated nearby the Ounasvaara hill. This is a beautiful nature area. During the autumn there are a lot of opportunities to go hiking in this area and during the winter you can go skiing.

leisure/culture

Rovaniemi is a relatively small city. However there are lots of nice activities both indoor and outdoor. If you like being outdoor (like I do) Rovaniemi and its surroundings are a paradise!!! You have to be aware of the fact that Rovaniemi is situated in the heart of Lapland, so that means you are surrounded by nature. During the autumn it is beautiful to go out for a nice hiking trip. I never seen such beautiful colors before. All the trees are colored yellow, orange and red. And when it is getting colder and the snow arrives the season for winter activities starts. For example you can decide to go cross-country skiing, downhill skiing, go on a husky safari, ride on a snowmobile, go ice fishing..... etc. As you can see there is a lot to do. And if you are lucky you may also see the northern lights. In the centre of Rovaniemi are also a couple of nice bars and nightclubs if you like to go out in the evening. It is of course also possible to make some trips. I went for example during my period abroad to the North Cape in Norway, Oulu, Kuusamo and Helsinki. These kind of trips make your exchange even more special!

**suggestions/tips**

Do I have any suggestions or tips? I would just say go and check yourself. Of course it is getting dark during the wintertime and of course it is getting cold, but you can also see this as a special experience. At the end you live on the arctic circle!!!

conclusions

would you recommend this host organisation/destination to others? please explain

I can really recommend this destination!!! I know it is not an usual place to go for an exchange period abroad. But I think that is also what makes this place magical. You will experience some things you never experienced in your life before. Rovaniemi really changed my life. And on top of that I have some great new international friends!!!

do you have any additional advice or comments?

If you want to have some more information about this destination, please don't hesitate to contact me. I will do my best to answer to all your questions. You can ask for my contact details at the International Office of the Faculty of Law, Economics and Governance.



University of Lapland, Rovaniemi

2010-2011

Preparation
exchange/placement application process
<p>The whole process started in October when I received the information about studying abroad by mail. At the end of October there was a presentation by the International Office and some of the former exchange students and there was also an information market. Before going there I already made a shortlist of destinations I would like to go to, which I did with the help of the website of the International Office and the foreign universities. During the information market I talked to the persons who had been exchange students at the universities I would like to go to. This is a really good way to get an impression about those universities, because brochures and websites are, of course, always very positive. After that it was up to myself. I had to make a definitive choice for one of the universities. This wasn't a very difficult choice, because the University of Lapland was already my favourite before the presentation and information market. The application forms had to be handed in by the 15th of January and after that the waiting began. It was only at the end of March before I finally heard that I was one of the two persons who was going to the University of Lapland.</p>
counselling/support at home university
<p>Throughout the whole process of application and also during the preparations for the actual exchange, the International Office is always there to help you with your problems and/or questions. I did not have not problems and I did not have much questions either. The only thing I remember me contacting the International Office about, was regarding the course Legal English for Academic Purposes. Next to that, the International Office organised a second presentation to provide all the exchange students with the necessary information before we were actually going abroad.</p>
academic preparation
<p>Before going on an exchange you need to pass all the courses from the first 1,5 year of your bachelor, so you need to have at least 90 ECTS. This is however just a requirement of Utrecht University, because the University of Lapland doesn't require you to have completed certain courses. Ofcourse it is important that you know the basics of general law, because they will come back in all different areas of law. Further, I think, it doesn't matter which courses you follow in Utrecht, because you cannot follow the same courses abroad anyway. The academic preparation therefore is less important than the language preparation in my opinion.</p>
language preparation
<p>It is not necessary that you speak Finnish when you go to Rovaniemi, because most of the Finnish people speak English very well. However, at the University of Lapland, there is the possibility to learn the Finnish language. Finnish is a very difficult language and doesn't have (much) similarities with other languages. However, it is very nice to take this course and learn at least the basics and some words and sentences you can use in everyday life. But as I said, you will manage perfectly with just speaking English. In Utrecht they give you the opportunity to follow the course Legal English for Academic Purposes (LEAP). After doubting for quite a while, I decided to not follow this course and I don't regret that. I could manage perfectly without it and besides that, the course takes a lot of time. Ofcourse this does not mean that you shouldn't follow this course. That is all up to yourself and I think it mainly depends on the level of your English.</p>
finances
<p>Before going to Finland, you should know that it isn't the cheapest country. On the contrary, it is quite expensive. The rent you have to pay, will be somewhere between the 150 and 200 euros. All the other things however, are more expensive than in the Netherlands. Especially in the first few weeks you have to spend quite a lot of money, because you have to buy almost everything because your apartment will in principle be</p>



completely empty (except for the furniture). It is also very useful to buy a bike. In total I spent about 3500 euros in 4 months, which includes all the excursions, gifts, plane tickets, etc. However, it depends on yourself how expensive your exchange is going to be. The Erasmus grant for me was only €200 per month, which didn't cover my expenses. Therefore it is important to have other sources of money like savings.

study/placement abroad period

study programme/work plan (concerning content and organisational issues)

The University of Lapland has a wide variety of courses you can follow. You can choose courses from every faculty as you wish and they also have an Arctic Studies Programme. The courses in that programme are all about the Arctic environment, which is very interesting. Please keep in mind that Utrecht University has some limitations regarding the courses you choose, at least if you want to transfer them into your studies. The system of studies is somewhat different than I was used to in Utrecht, at least for the Law faculty. If there are lectures given for a course, you will usually get all those lectures within one or two weeks and after that a lecture exam and/or an essay. For most of the courses you also have to do some self-study and some courses are completely self-study. You have to read books and then take a bookexam. For every area of law dates are set on which you can take a bookexam. This gives you a lot of freedom to make your own schedule, but it also demands self-discipline. If a certain date doesn't suit you, you can ask the responsible teacher for another date. The University of Lapland is proud of this system of 'Academic Freedom'.

academic quality of education/placement activities

The University of Lapland is a university with a high quality of education. It is one of the only three universities in Finland where you can study law. Law professors are amongst the most well-known in Finland and they speak English very well. The lessons are given in small groups, partly due to the fact that it is a quite small university, but this makes the lessons more interactive and there is more opportunity for questions. I think that the level of education for the exchange students at the University of Lapland isn't as high as at Utrecht University. However, I think this has also to do with the fact of being an exchange student, because I had the idea that the courses of the Finnish students were more difficult.

counselling/support at host institution/organisation

The first contact with the University of Lapland was with the International Coordinator of the Faculty of Law, Jani Suokanerva. He is very helpful with all your questions and problems, both before and during your stay. Actually everybody at the University is very helpful. Next to that, you will get a Finnish student tutor who will help you during the first few weeks of your stay. They will help you find your way in the city, fill in forms and they will be your guide during the orientation programme. Your tutor is not just there to be your tutor, but he can also become a friend if you both want to. I became friends with my tutor and we saw each other regularly throughout the whole semester.

transfer of credits

At the University of Lapland they also use the ECTS-system, which makes it very easy to transfer your credits. My credits haven't been transferred yet, but I think they will all be accepted. Utrecht University can have some restrictions regarding the level of the courses and the transfer of credits for those courses. However, I was told about this before I went on the exchange.

student life

welcome/orientation programme

In the first week we had an orientation programme of 4 days. In this week you get to know not only your Finnish tutor and the university, but also the city and most important of all, the other exchange students. You get a lot of information about for example the system of study, the courses you can follow, how to register for courses and all other kinds of information. The university also organised a guided citytour by bus during which we first met Santa and an International GetTogether, where you had the opportunity to get to know more international students and they provided some drinks and typical Finnish food.

accommodation



Most of the exchange students from the University of Lapland lived in Kuntotie 3 and 5 and some of them in Rovala. All the apartments are rented by the DAS. The buildings and apartments are quite old, but good and definitely worth the money. There are apartments for 1, 2 or 3 persons and you will pay somewhere between 150 and 200 euros per month. Important to know is that Kuntotie 5 does not have an internet connection. I lived in an apartment for 3 persons and we all had our own bedroom, there were two shared bathrooms and a shared kitchen. The apartment is furnished, but you have to buy things like cutlery, pans, blanket, pillow, etc. yourself. I was very lucky, because there was a Finnish student already living in the apartment so I did not have to buy most of the things. In your bedroom there is a bed, a desk and a closet. All things are quite old, but good, except for the mattresses. The nicest thing from the accommodation is the fact that most of the international students are living closely together. Kuntotie is about 3 to 4 kilometers from university, so it is recommendable to buy a bike (there is also a bus going to university).

leisure/culture

Despite the fact that most people think of Lapland as an area with nothing, there is a lot to do in and around Rovaniemi. Rovaniemi has a few clubs and bars, but like most of the food and drinks, alcohol is very expensive. More important is that you like nature, because Rovaniemi is surrounded by just forest. Rovaniemi therefore is a city with a lot of outdoor-activities. Ounasvaara-hill for example is a very popular place to hike, run and mountainbike in summer, and in winter you can go (cross country) skiing or snowboard. In the winter season there are also a lot of safaris like a huskysafari, a reindeersafari or a snowmobile safari. Ofcourse you also have to pay a visit to the Arktikum and Santa Claus, who lives at the Arctic Circle just outside of Rovaniemi. Other trips I made during my stay were trips to Ranua Zoo, Helsinki, Oulu, Ruka (Kuusamo) and the most amazing trip was the trip to the Northcape. If you have the time, you should really go there, because it is very beautiful. Keep in mind that you have to go through a tunnel which will be closed if the weather is too bad (for example if there is too much snow).

suggestions/tips

There is one thing which I really enjoyed during my stay which I want to mention here and that is my Finnish Friend Family. The University of Lapland gives you the opportunity to really get to know the Finnish culture and Family life by getting you a Finnish Friend Family. I would recommend this to all exchange students, because I had a really nice family with who I spent quite a lot of time. They for example took me elk-hunting, we spent Independence Day together and we had a few dinners. I think that when you are on an exchange, you should try to get to know the country as good as possible and a Finnish Friend Family is a very good way to do that. (Partying can also be done in the Netherlands.)

conclusions

would you recommend this host organisation/destination to others? please explain

I would absolutely recommend the University of Lapland. Maybe the dark and the cold are scaring, but it is a whole new experience and that is what an exchange is all about. In the beginning I really had to get used to the darkness, because it really messes up your rhythm. However, you will get used to it quite fast. The cold is not that bad and you will get used to it more fast than to the darkness. It is all about the way you dress. So don't get yourself scared by the cold and the darkness and go study at the University of Lapland. When you come back in the Netherlands, you will like Lapland better! At least I did!

do you have any additional advice or comments?

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University of Lapland, Rovaniemi

2010-2011

preparation

exchange/placement application process

I always had the idea to go on an exchange. So for that reason I decided to go to the information evening of the Utrecht University about the exchange possibilities. Before I went to the information evening I already made several choices for myself. For example it was important for me that the education was in English and I had the dream to go to a country I had never visited in my life before. During the information event of the Utrecht University I got in contact with a previous exchange student who went to Rovaniemi in Finland. She was very enthusiastic about this destination. And she was right! This destination had everything I was looking for. The education was in English and it was in a country I never visited before. So my choice was made. Rovaniemi in Finland it was! After the application process of writing a motivation letter and making a financial plan etc. I was selected to go to Rovaniemi.

counselling/support at home university

The counseling and support from the international office in Utrecht was perfect. Luckily I didn't have any problems in the application process and my exchange period abroad. Everything went very smooth. The staff of the international office in Utrecht informed me very well on all kinds of subjects you need to take care of while going on an exchange.

academic preparation

Before I went on my exchange I followed the Notarial route at the Utrecht University. In this Notarial route there is no opportunity to go on an exchange in your bachelor. But like I said before I always had the idea to go on an exchange. So I decided to go after finishing the Notarial route and take extra courses for my bachelor degree during my exchange period abroad.

language preparation

The language of education at the University of Lapland is English. In Utrecht there is the possibility to follow the course Legal English for Academic Purposes (LEAP). Although this course is very useful, it is not necessary to take this course. The Finnish language is however a very difficult one. Almost all the languages spoken in Europe belong to the same Indo-European family of languages. The Finnish language is a member of the Finno-Ugrian language family. The structure and vocabulary of Finnish differ greatly from the other languages spoken in Europe.

finances

In the brochure of the University of Lapland there is some information about the costs of living in Finland. They say it is about € 550,- / € 600,- a month to live in Rovaniemi. In my opinion this is right. In the beginning your expenses are a little bit more. For example it is useful to have a bike. You can buy a bike secondhand and sell the bike again when you leave. The University is about 30 minutes away from the student housing. For that reason it is good to have a bike. It also depends on how many trips you are going to make. If you are on an exchange you also want to see something from the country and the environment. These kind of trips can increase your expenses a little bit more.

study/placement abroad period

study programme/work plan (concerning content and organisational issues)

It is recommended that you have a study plan before arrival. But also keep in mind that the program at the University of Lapland is a very flexible one. It is possible that courses you have chosen before departure are not available at the time of your arrival in Finland. Luckily all teachers are very helpful with solving any kind of problems. I started with the course 'Introduction to the Arctic'. This course is about the environment of Lapland and its people who are living there. Personally I found this course really interesting and nice. And on top of that it also included a two day excursion to a national park. Furthermore it



is interesting to take some Finnish language courses. It is nice to know some Finnish words and phrases.

academic quality of education/placement activities

The quality of the education at the University of Lapland is good. It is however not possible to compare this to the Utrecht University. The system of education at the University of Lapland is totally different compared to the system we have at the Utrecht University. It is for example normal to have lectures for about a week and after that you have to start self-study for the course. For some courses it is also possible to write an essay instead of making an exam. So as you can see there is a lot of freedom and independency given to the students.

counselling/support at host institution/organisation

The counseling and support at the University of Lapland is very good. The teachers and staff of the international office are very helpful. It is easy to get in contact with teachers and other staff by email. Everybody is responding very fast on your emails. What also helps is that the University of Lapland is relatively small. As an exchange student you also have a mentor. This mentor is a Finnish student. Your mentor is also there to help you with all kind of problems. And I was lucky to have a really great mentor, who now became a very good friend of mine!

transfer of credits

Unfortunately at the moment I can't tell much about the transfer of credits. This has not happened yet. But I do not expect any problems. Like I said before the application process also went very smooth. Everything is well organized, so for that reason I think I can expect my credits really soon.

student life

welcome/orientation programme

The University of Lapland and the student union organized an orientation program the week before the classes started. It was a great week!!! We got a lot of information about the system of study in the university and information about all kinds of other practical things. We also had a guided tour around the city of Rovaniemi and we were brought to Santa Claus in Santa's Village (Rovaniemi is the home of Santa Claus and you can visit him every single day on the Arctic Circle)! During this week there were of course a lot of freshman parties. It was also nice to get to know the other exchange students.

accommodation

I was really satisfied about the accommodation. I had a nice apartment with two other students. Everyone had his own room and we had a shared kitchen and a shared bathroom. In my opinion the apartment was really spacious. There were also a lot of facilities available, like a laundry room, a gym (if you like to sport) and even a sauna. I lived at the Kuntotie campus. This is where almost all the exchange students live. The Kuntotie campus is situated nearby the Ounasvaara hill. This is a beautiful nature area. During the autumn there are a lot of opportunities to go hiking in this area and during the winter you can go skiing.

leisure/culture

Rovaniemi is a relatively small city. However there are lots of nice activities both indoor and outdoor. If you like being outdoor (like I do) Rovaniemi and its surroundings are a paradise!!! You have to be aware of the fact that Rovaniemi is situated in the heart of Lapland, so that means you are surrounded by nature. During the autumn it is beautiful to go out for a nice hiking trip. I never seen such beautiful colors before. All the trees are colored yellow, orange and red. And when it is getting colder and the snow arrives the season for winter activities starts. For example you can decide to go cross-country skiing, downhill skiing, go on a husky safari, ride on a snowmobile, go ice fishing..... etc. As you can see there is a lot to do. And if you are lucky you may also see the northern lights. In the centre of Rovaniemi are also a couple of nice bars and nightclubs if you like to go out in the evening. It is of course also possible to make some trips. I went for example during my period abroad to the North Cape in Norway, Oulu, Kuusamo and Helsinki. These kind



of trips make your exchange even more special!

suggestions/tips

Do I have any suggestions or tips? I would just say go and check yourself. Of course it is getting dark during the wintertime and of course it is getting cold, but you can also see this as a special experience. At the end you live on the arctic circle!!!

conclusions

would you recommend this host organisation/destination to others? please explain

I can really recommend this destination!!! I know it is not an usual place to go for an exchange period abroad. But I think that is also what makes this place magical. You will experience some things you never experienced in your life before. Rovaniemi really changed my life. And on top of that I have some great new international friends!!!

do you have any additional advice or comments?

If you want to have some more information about this destination, please don't hesitate to contact me. I will do my best to answer to all your questions. You can ask for my contact details at the International Office of the Faculty of Law, Economics and Governance.



University of Lapland, Rovaniemi

2008-2009

Preparation

Study – What drew my interest to the University of Lapland was the fact that, even though it was a relatively small university, there was still a vast collection of interesting courses to follow. The Law and Business faculties are quite large. There is also an Arctic Studies Programme, which holds courses on everything about the Arctic Area. (The nature, culture and governance...) These are also very interesting. So in the beginning my list of optional courses was much and much too long.

Contacts – The contact in the beginning was with Jani Suokaverna, the international coordinator of the law faculty. He was very nice and helpful, even when I missed a deadline for registration due to a misunderstanding between me and the international office here in the Netherlands.

Language – The Finnish language is a very difficult one. It has nothing in common with any other European language save Hungarian (also known as one of the most difficult languages). But luckily the Finnish people speak very good English, (well, most of them). So you can get away with only speaking English. Off course it is nice to know some Finnish words and phrases, and in the beginning of each semester they have Finnish for Foreigners courses in different levels, for which you even get credits.

Finances – They say it is about 500 Euro's a month to live in Rovaniemi. I think that is about true. For rent you spent about 170 to 200 Euro's and food in Finland is more expensive than in Holland. Also in the beginning you have to buy a lot of stuff to get by. It is very, very useful to have a bike, for example. (you can buy them secondhand, and sell again in the end). And naturally you're not only going to be studying, but also going out and enjoying the environment. Maybe rent some ski's, or going on a Husky tour, buy souvenirs. Go on country trips to Tromsø, Northcape, Russia, etc, etc. All just depending on your budget. I think, in total, I spent about 4000 Euro's on my 5 months exchange. (plain tickets included)

Study abroad

Programme – I mentioned a lot above about the programme. It is very useful to have an idea on what you plan to do before you arrive. But keep in mind that the programme in Rovaniemi is very flexible. Which means that there can be changes, also inflicted by you. Another student for example asked a teacher to make a course available also in the spring semester which was originally only given in the fall semester. And I got an extra credit for a course, because the professor put in more literature. On the other hand, I missed an exam because it was given earlier than was known in January. So keep an eye on the programme for last minute changes and don't hesitate to ask for changes in your benefit.

Quality of education – The quality of education is very, very high. Even though it is free for Finnish students. What helps I think is that the classes are small. Not too much students. Which leaves more room for interactive teaching. The students are drawn in the lectures and can ask more questions. Also the atmosphere is more relaxed. No tension and the teacher vs. student relationship is very positive, because it is not based on power but on respect. Teachers are called tutors...



Counselling/support – As I mentioned above, the support is very good. The teachers and other people on the university are very friendly and helpful. Also the fact that the university is relatively small, makes that you get to know the teachers and students better. Even the Finnish students. Every exchange-student receives a mentor; a Finnish student to help you around. This way you also have a way into the Finnish community.

Transfer credits – I have no real comments about this item. Everything went smooth and without a problem. They also use ECTS on the Finnish universities, so it is very simple.

Student life

Welcome/orientation – The first week we had an orientation programme organized by university and student union. It was really great. Not only to learn about the university, but also to get to know the other exchange students.

Accommodation – I chose for accommodation in the student housing farthest away from the university. It was also the cheapest option. Unfortunately I got a chamber in an apartment without an internet connection. This was a disappointment. But with some neighbours we managed to arrange an internet connection for ourselves. Also I did not really like the quality of the mattress on the bed. It was too old and worn through. But these were my only problems with the house/apartment.

Leisure/culture – There are a lot of nice activities to do in and around Rovaniemi. Even though it is a small city. In the beginning I had a little trouble adapting to the dark hours in the north. But after a while it was really great and a totally different experience than you are used to. There are winter activities, but also summer activities. And if you love nature, like me, it is paradise.

Suggestions/tips - Just go and stay open to new impressions. Don't let yourself be scared of the cold. It's not really that bad. I didn't wear half the sweaters and pullovers I brought.

Conclusions

Recommendable destination? – Yes, definitely. I enjoyed it a lot and received all the credits I wanted. Any advice(s)? – Check above...



University of Lapland, Rovaniemi

2008-2009

Rovaniemi

Before I left, there was a lot of preparation needed. The first thing was to determine a destination. The process of that decision was a matter of looking what I wanted in a country. It was important for me that the education was in English, it had to be in Europe and the ideal would be that I had a good feeling about the country. England was not an option for me, so soon Scandinavia came into the picture. I had already visited Sweden and Norway several times and I am always looking for something new, so Finland was interesting. After the information event of the University of Utrecht where I saw a brochure of Rovaniemi, the decision was made. I was determined to go there, even though I would be the only Dutch student of that semester. After the procedure of writing a motivation letter etc; I was allowed to go ahead with the planning to go to Rovaniemi. A Masterstudent must be aware of the fact that it is really hard to get ECTS into your UU programme. I am lucky enough to have finished all my courses in the Netherlands, so everything I would do in Rovaniemi would be extra credits but do not count on your exchange courses to be recognised at home automatically!

Money was the main issue for me. Due to the fact that I am a Masterstudent and that I would go abroad in my sixth year, I had no right to state benefit anymore. The finances would be the state loan, my parents monthly allowance and the money I had saved from working the previous months. Given that, my opinion is that money should not be a reason to stay at home. Also I am lucky that I have parents who encouraged me to go abroad and would support me if necessary.

In Utrecht we have the obligation to follow the course Legal English for Academic Purposes, LEAP, as a preparation for going abroad. I have found this very interesting, a lot of work but it turned out to be extremely useful when I was in Lapland. The University of Lapland is easy accessible, everyone responded their email quickly and they explained extensively which forms I have to fill in, deadlines and I received a lot of information about the organisation and the courses before I left. This was important for me as a Masterstudent, because I had to hand in my Learning Agreement beforehand.

On the 27th of August I arrived in Rovaniemi. After an orientation programme of a week, I had a lot of information about the University, the city and, not to forget, I had met a lot of nice people. The programme for my studies abroad were already made at home, so for me it was a matter of checking when the courses were given. In Lapland you do not have to buy books, everything is (usually) available in the library and if not, then you can email the professor and he will find an alternative book or assignment for you. For students who have to pay everything themselves this can be a great benefit.

The education began at the 9th of September. I started with the course Introduction to the Arctic, a course about the area where I was living at the moment. The University of Lapland is connected with the Arctic Centre of Rovaniemi. Therefore students from all the faculties have the possibilities to take courses about all various areas of the Arctic. This was really interesting; we also had an excursion to a national park.



The quality of the education is good. The courses were various levels for me, because I also take some bachelor courses, but always interesting. The best thing was the independency given to the students. We had lectures for about a week, after that it was self-study or writing an essay. When the exam was on a date that was not suitable for you, you always had the opportunity to write the professor an email and ask if it was possible to change the exam date, or to make an essay instead.

The transfer of credits has not happened yet, so I do not know how that will go but given the good organisation of everything else, I assume this will also be ok. My transcript was available online the whole time, so it was easy for me to check my grades during the process. Also you usually have possibilities to get extra credits for a course, writing an extra essay or reading an extra book in order to get the credits you need for home is never a problem in Lapland.

Erasmus exchange is not only studying. The student life in Rovaniemi is underestimated. I had a great time, saw a lot of Lapland and have made friends for life. The Finnish people are not easy; you cannot make small talk with them on the street or in the supermarket. However, the amount of exchange students make up for this. We had more than 20 different nationalities and learnt a lot about each other. So do not let the nature of the Fins stop you. As mentioned, I was warmly welcomed by the University, where the staffs are all friendly and speak English. After the orientation week it was up to us. Almost 80% of the exchange lived in the Ounasvaara nature area, at Kuntotie campus. Therefore we usually ate together, took walks on the Ounasvaara, went sledging and had parties in our own campus. You can go out in the city, it has a few nice nightclubs but they are quite expensive. Our accommodation was organised in a way that each building had 4 or 5 flats, 4 floors with 3 apartments so we had a lot of students living together. There were not a lot of problems, we had a laundry room, the front doors of the buildings were locked in the evening and if something was broken, it was fixed in a few days. Important in this matter is that Kuntotie 5 has no internet (unless you buy it from a private expensive company). This can be a problem if you go for a year, but it is the building with the most exchange in there, so it is up to you! The university has a wireless network which works well.

After the orientation, I became part of a group of international friends with whom I took quite a few trips. We went to Norway to visit the North Cape. I can recommend to go North Cape, it is a magical experience. Remember to go early in the semester (or late when you are in Spring), you have to pass a tunnel and when it is freezing or there is snow, the tunnel is closed and you made the trip for nothing. So check that before you go! Furthermore, we went to Kuusamo for the ski-jump competition and we made a lot of walks on the Ounasvaara hills. I can really say that I have seen a lot of Lapland.

We did not have to organise everything ourselves. The University and the Student Union (everyone is obligated to become a member of that) organised a lot of activities for the Erasmus students. We had a cottage weekend in the beginning of October. It was a great opportunity to get to know each other better; we went with 50 people to a big house in the nature. That was not all, they also had a Finnish cooking course, winter swimming in the frozen river and of course theme parties (Halloween, Sitsfest, Farewell) which were all really cheap. In my opinion these activities have bounded the exchange students a lot, the reunion is already planned and I am home 4 days so that says a lot I think!



I cannot write a report about Lapland without telling about the weather. Yes, it gets cold, we had snow from mid November and it will probably stay until March. The temperatures are between minus 5 and minus 20 (that is quite cold). For me, this was not a problem. You have to buy the appropriate clothes, but then it is totally manageable. Kuntotie is about 30 minutes away from the University (that is why all the exchange buy a bike), but I has not stopped to go there every day. Sometimes when we had no courses, we would just go there to have lunch with everyone. The snow gives you new experiences, which you can never have in your own country. Swimming in a frozen river, stand in the snow until your hips and have a snow fight every day before you go to sleep is something that stays in your mind. Even though I am not the biggest nature lover, Lapland is beautiful in the autumn as well. There is no snow yet, but I have never seen so many colours of red and orange. I think you have noticed that in the telling of the story, I have changed from the I to the We perspective. That is how I feel it; I have never felt that it was a problem that I was the only Dutch student. When you speak English, you can manage yourself perfect in Lapland. I made a great group of friends, which I will miss a lot.

I can recommend Rovaniemi from the bottom of my heart, do not let the idea of snow and ice stop you. It brings so much beauty! Rovaniemi has been a great experience for me; I speak English fluently, I have great friends, a lot of new experiences which I will never forget!