



Universitat Pompeu Fabra Barcelona

2018-2019

PREPARATION	
exchange application process	
	The application process was quite clear. Be prepared for a lot of administrative work though. You will have to send in documents to your home university, your host university, the erasmus grant organisation etc. If you want to change your courses during your exchange you will have to get different documents signed by your home and host university.
counselling & support at Utrecht University	
	Utrecht University was of great help to me. Whenever I contacted the international office, they would reply soon after. It was very clear what was expected of me and whenever I had questions the International Office would help me out.
academic preparation	
	I did not (have to) prepare my self academically.
language preparation	
	I took a language course of 5 weeks during the summer. I would recommend this to anyone who is thinking about studying in Barcelona but does not speak Spanish. Although I took all of my courses in English, the language course taught me how to communicate with people in the city and at the university (outside of the classrooms).
finances	
	With my government grant and the Erasmus grant I was able to finance everything. Living costs are comparable to the Netherlands. Renting a room in Barcelona will probably be more expensive than it is in Utrecht. I live in Amsterdam, so for me rent was cheaper in Barcelona. Going out for dinner and public transport are cheaper than they are in the Netherlands, so you will not have to spend too much on those things.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD	
study programme (content and organisational issues)	
	I took Contract Law, Justice and Individual Rights, History of Catalan Law and Spanish A2. Most courses are 4 or 5 ECTS courses and UPF has trimesters instead of semesters. This makes it hard to take courses that add up to 30 ECTS, because if you do your schedule will be crazy. Utrecht University told us (students doing their exchange at UPF) we could take 20 ECTS. I did not need 30 ECTS, because I already took extra courses at Utrecht University, but if you do want to take 30 ECTS at UPF be prepared to be on campus a lot. The Spanish classes that UPF offers are really good. The teacher is amazing and UPF students can take the courses for a discounted price.
academic quality of education activities	
	UPF ranks highly, so I had high expectations. I found the quality of education to be good, but not outstanding. The level of education is comparable to Utrecht, but the teaching methods are very different. Most courses consist of lectures only. For some bigger courses you have to attend seminars as well. I only had a few seminars for Contract Law. Attendance is not mandatory for lectures, it is for seminars. The university offers courses in English, Spanish and Catalan. UPF does not offer a huge amount of English courses, but it is possible to take all of your courses in English (as I did). If you speak Catalan and/or Spanish you will be able to choose from a much bigger selection of courses.



counselling & support at receiving university abroad

The international office at UPF was very helpful and generally responded quickly to any requests or questions.

transfer of credits

The international office of UPF transferred my credits to Utrecht University. As far as I know this went well.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

I believe there was a welcome week organised by the university. I did not partake in many activities, because I had already made some friends at my language course. The welcome presentation at UPF was very nice. I met some fellow international students here and was informed about opportunities to play sports, take dancing classes, go on cultural trips etc. This all sounded very cool, so if you are interested in doing sports or taking some classes to meet other people, this is definitely possible!

accommodation

I rented a room in the neighbourhood Eixample. I shared the apartment with 5 other international students, which was very cool because this way I met people from all over the world. I would recommend the neighbourhoods Gracia and Eixample for living. Some of my friends lived in El Raval and Gòtico which are older, more central neighbourhoods near the beach. These are cool places to live as well, but very noisy and busy at night. Finding accommodation is not hard. You can easily search for a room online or book a hostel and search for a room while you are already in Barcelona.

leisure & culture

The city is amazing! There is so much to see and do, I was never bored. You can go to the beach every day in summer. You can visit Gaudí buildings, museums (I recommend Picasso, Miró and MNAC) and parks. There are amazing restaurants, bars and clubs all over the city. All year, there are many food and music festivals all over the city (La Mercè and Las Fiestas de Gracia were especially cool). The weather is great, so you can always go outside and do something. I would recommend going on an exchange to Barcelona to everyone, because the city is so great!

I took a trip to Morocco with a group of friends. There are organisations that organise trips for Erasmus students in Barcelona to Morocco (and other places) all year round, so it is very easy to book a trip like this. I also took daytrips to the Costa Brava and Andorra. Some friends of mine went to Valencia, Madrid, Sevilla, Girona and some other places as well.

suggestions/tips

1. Find a good room that is not too expensive. Don't settle for the first thing you find because you are afraid you will not find something else, you will!
2. Learn some Spanish: it will help you a lot if you know a even a little Spanish (or Catalan!)
3. Make a list of everything you want to see and do, so you get around to it.

CONCLUSIONS

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

Yes! The university is good and the city is great! I had the most amazing time in Barcelona and would recommend this city to everyone.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

Definitely go on an exchange, you will not regret it!



PREPARATION

exchange application process

If you follow the instruction given and keep an eye on your email-adress the exchange application process is not too difficult. If you have questions you can always contact the international office.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

I had lots of help of the REBO International office. I was very happy for that. Everytime I had a question I could phone and email them. They are very helpfull

academic preparation

Before I left for my exchange I looked up what my courses would be like.

language preparation

I did not need lots of language preparation. I did a Spanish course at my university in Barcelona.

finances

With my grant, family and savings I had enough money to live in Barcelona and to be able to do fun things in and around the city

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)

My study programme had to be changed because my timetable had lots of overlap. After some great help I

academic quality of education activities

The lectures at UPF are great. The level of education is not too high but they want tot challenge you to be active during the class. I really liked that. The content of my courses were really interesting and different from my home university

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

Everything was very clear at Universitat Pompeu Fabra. The email contact was good and there are various people who want to help you at the Univerisity

transfer of credits

The Trasnfer of Credit was easy and they were very fast in anwsering my questions

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

There was a welomce & orientation programme. It was a good possibilty to meet students from different faculties

accommodation

I lived with 2 other girls from Holland. We found our accommodation by our self via the website idealisa

leisure & culture

I have been sightseeing a lot. There is so much to do and see in Barcelona. There was enough time to do so, next to my University life.

suggestions/tips



Go to Sevilla! (You can buy cheap tickets). My favorite neighborhood in Barcelona was Gracia

CONCLUSIONS

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

I would recommend Barcelona and Universitat Pompeu Fabra to everyone! It was an amazing experience, with nice people, good food, great lectures and helpful people. I have learnt so much in my abroad period, at Univeristy but also my personal life.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

2017-2018

PREPARATION

exchange application process

The first step was to decide on the country and city in which I would spend my time abroad. Because of my prior knowledge of the Spanish language, the choice was easy, it would be Spain. I checked all the available universities in Spain and decided on UPF in Barcelona. Then the application had to be started. I remember that it was a lot of preparation, with different documents being necessary. And then when you finally hand in the required documents, it's two months of waiting before you even hear something. This was quite hard, but in hindsight, all worth it.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

The International Office of the REBO was always there for me during the preparation. Whenever I had a question I could e-mail them and I would receive an answer within days. Calling was even quicker, but it was harder because of the limited opening hours.

academic preparation

My academic preparation was mostly getting my level of Spanish back to the level that it had been when I got out of High School, this was sadly not that easy without spending a lot of money. But I have to say that you do not necessarily need a high level of Spanish to survive in Barcelona. UPF offers extensive language courses that can teach you the language in as little as two trimesters.

language preparation

Due to certain circumstances I could not do a language course in Spanish before I left for Barcelona. his caused my spanish to be slightly under the level that I had expected it to be.

finances

Finances were a big issue at the start. Ofcourse you have to make sure that you have enough finances to survive the months that you are intending to stay. I was really lucky to get a lot of support from my parents which made it possible for me to live i Barcelona without having to worry about my financial situation.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)

The study programme became clear in the months before I was actually moving there, but it was still the question of what the courses exactly entailed because there were no syllabi for every course yet. This was very chaotic, but in the end it all turned out quite alright.



academic quality of education activities

The academic quality of UPF is definitely lower than in Utrecht, but nonetheless they had some very interesting courses that were worth going to UPF for. It was surprising that at UPF they work mostly with lectures and very little seminars. While in Utrecht the amount of seminars and lectures is fifty fifty.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

The OMA office was always there for the Erasmus students to find support if they had questions. The teachers that gave the courses were sometimes very unhelpful and inconsiderate towards Erasmus students.

transfer of credits

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

Barcelona's ESN made sure that there was a brilliant welcome week for the new Erasmus students, with a lot of activities. You could buy a welcome pack which gave you acces to all the fun activities. These were both cultural, social or gastronomical. Apart from this welcome week they kept organising fun activities throughout the year. We felt really welcome in Barcelona and it was a great way to meet new people.

accommodation

The accomodation was actually really easily found through the company called RentRoom Barcelona. They have several houses in the city with separate rooms for around 5/6 people per floor. I ended up in a house which had two floors owned by RentRoom, which was the reason that I actually felt like living with 11 people. That was really great. The building was in the middle of the centre and was quite big.

leisure & culture

Barcelona is a brilliant city and there is culture everywhere. I learned so much about the Catalan culture in the many museums that are in Barcelona. But also by visiting the houses made by Gaudi. The Catalans are really proud of their culture which is why it is almost impossible to not learn a lot about their culture. We tried to visit most of the Catalan holidays, which gave us the feeling to be kind of part of the Catalan vibe. Leisure wise there is so much in Barcelona aswell. Ofcourse you have the far stretching beaches which start with the famous Barceloneta. But Barcelona is also rich in parks, with the biggest being Park Guell, which offers plenty of places to relax. Apart from that we spent a lot of time in Park Ciutadella, which is right next to the university of Pompeu Fabra. The club life in Barcelona is one of a kind, with a lot of special nights every night of the week. The ESN organisation also organizes a night every week in Apollo, where you can meet other internationals but also locals.

suggestions/tips

If you go abroad to Barcelona, be sure to either learn some Spanish, or if you speak Spanish already, try to learn some Catalan. Be prepared for hot weather, but if you stay in the city centre, there is usually bad isolation so take some clothes for in the cold winter months aswell. It gets cold in Barcelona! And ofcourse, always watch your pockets, after a few months the caution wanes, but Barcelona is still a very criminal city and thieves are always on the lookout.

CONCLUSIONS

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



Yes, Barcelona is an unforgettable city, which continues to amaze you day after day. The people are one of a kind, with the weirdest people sometimes walking through the streets. The university is very close-knit so you really have the feeling to be on a campus, that is why I would definitely recommend going there. The Erasmus Student Network is very big and there is always something to do that will let you meet new people. The weather is ofcourse also a big plus. One last reason why I would definitely recommend this destination is because of the interesting culture that lives in Barcelona. If you are interested in learning about new cultures, Barcelona is a place where you will learn about a culture that you wouldn't learn about in any other city in Spain. And learning about this culture, and the interesting political situation there really enriched my life.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

An Erasmus experience is one of the best things you can do to further expand your C.V. but also to further expand your personal life. Experiences with other cultures and being totally on your own abroad is one of the best experiences you can have.

2017-2018

PREPARATION

exchange application process

It was a long process and a lot of necessary paperwork, but support is well available (see next topics). It is important to be aware of the total work of the application process, really well in advance starting with it is necessary. Especially the motivation letter can be difficult. I personally tried to adjust it to my specific choice, to make sure it had the elements that were embedded in local culture of my preferred university.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

I am more than happy about the support. As I said, the preparation takes a lot of time and patience. Having the staff from the International Office at your disposal for all of your questions, makes it a lot easier. At the time of the application process and after I was selected for my university, there were always things that you wanted an answer on right away and you could get that.

academic preparation

I cannot say that I could academically prepare myself for the courses I took abroad, because they were only available for me for enrolment in May 2017 and the last period in Utrecht had already started at that time.

language preparation

Especially at the Universitat Pompeu Fabra in Barcelona, it is important to be aware of the fact that the university has been named after the creator of the Catalan dictionary. This means that Catalan is widely present in the university, so good knowledge of Spanish is recommended. As for my own preparation, I took a few courses at the Babel Institute in Utrecht and used the Duolingo and the Tandem apps to keep up with the Spanish on a regular basis.

finances

Students are quite frequently being reminded of the state of their uploads on Osiris for the Erasmus grant. This amount covers a lot of the expenses abroad, but by far not everything. I would personally recommend to save a lot of money beforehand to make sure not to be too dependent on the grant. In case something happens with the grant, e.g. a delay because of some required documents, you will already have enough money to fall back on.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD



study programme (content and organisational issues)

I found that the study programme was well manageable. In the beginning of the study year, I was still trying to find out how the schedule and the online learning environment worked. As soon as I found it out, I noticed that the number of mandatory hours per week was a bit less than in Utrecht. However, back in Utrecht there was always a lot of preparation to do for every class, which was not always the case in Barcelona. Apart from that, the big difference with Utrecht was that in Barcelona I did not need to always have my lawbooks with me, the way of studying and the academic focus was different. Finally, choosing courses was something that you had to do already at home before departure, but in case something changed you had to do that shortly before or just after a new period had started.

academic quality of education activities

I was overall satisfied with the academic quality of educational activities. At the beginning of the year, we had an introduction week, during which several people came to speak about their field or department. People from the Erasmus network, the police and different academic scholars spoke about their areas. It was good to know that there were a lot of people you could fall back on in case of hardship.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

The support mostly came from the International Office in Barcelona and I am happy with how things were taken care of. I do have to say that one time I was afraid of not passing a deadline for an Erasmus document because I was waiting for a long time for a signature from that International Office. Luckily, the Dutch International Office was aware of the fact that delays were not uncommon at universities abroad. Apart from this one thing, I am satisfied of how the support was in Barcelona. The system of changing courses was a bit unclear to me at first, but they provided good support to me about this.

transfer of credits

The transfer of credits was never something I had influence on. Because the number of credits was different between Utrecht and Barcelona, I could only hope that the transfer did not mean a significant change. In Utrecht, it was usually 5 or 7,5 credit points, but in Barcelona there were more options. The Board of Examiners in Utrecht is solely responsible for the transfer and they did not acknowledge one course I followed in Barcelona, because it had too much overlap with another course I already followed. This was a shame, but after all, there was not much I could do. One just has to be aware of the fact that this can happen after having followed an entire course.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

I am happy with the welcome & orientation programme that was arranged by ESN. They provided a welcome week during the first week of classes, as well as a buddy system that you could sign up for. This meant that you could already get to know some other exchange students and a local student, which could be both fun and very practical. Sadly, I never managed to meet up with my entire buddy group. I heard from a lot of other people that it was mostly very nice to already have a small group of friends before starting the year. Apart from the buddy system, there were lots of activities that you could participate in to get to know more people.

accommodation

Finding adequate accommodation in Barcelona can be difficult. Housing is not cheap for international students. I would not recommend starting the search only after arriving in the city, but doing it way in advance to make sure to get a good room/house for a normal price on a good location. Accommodation is getting more expensive now over the years and I think the average price of a room is around 500 euros per month. Next to that, one should be aware of the fact that landlords and renting agencies often misused the situation of exchange students, depending on them for their housing and therefore overcharging too much for the most simple things to make money out of them. Finally, I found myself a very nice house with other international students from my



age that I became the best friends with during my time in Barcelona. Such good friends that I did not feel the need that much to mingle with the ESN network and meet new people.

leisure & culture

As for leisure & culture, there is always more than enough to do in Barcelona every day of the week. The ESN association organised lots of activities to do with other international students. As I said, however, I spent most of my time with my roommates when I explored the city. Barcelona is really proud of their own Catalan culture and you will see that most of the city is based on the Catalan autonomous region, in which they can have their own language. Street names and important city buildings are usually in Catalan instead of Spanish, but with some knowledge of Spanish, you can usually figure it out. For the real culture vultures, museums are often not expensive with a student discount. If you just want to walk around the city and discover new places, I recommend the 3-month metro ticket and often take the metro to a whole other station far away from the city center and walk all the back, which is also usually not that far. Lastly, I recommend the Bunkers of Carmel as a hangout space at night for locals and a good spot to watch the sunset.

suggestions/tips

Prepare your Spanish level, because a lot of important things in the city and the university are in Catalan. This can really help you understand most stuff around you without help of others. I also recommend to join the buddy system from the ESN network, to make sure you already know some people at the beginning of the year. Next to that, I would advise finding a house with other international students, because I really think living in such an international environment has added value, both socially and culturally. Buy the 3-month metro ticket if you have to travel far and often to not have to worry about buying tickets every time again and save money. Finally, I recommend travelling a lot in Spain whenever you have the time in a weekend. I have taken the plane for a cheap weekend with roommates to explore cities like Valencia, Madrid or Malaga. More closer to Barcelona, you can easily take the regional train to places like Figueres or Girona.

CONCLUSIONS

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

Yes, I would definitely recommend both the university and the city of Barcelona to others. It is a very complete city with a beach life and that true urban feeling. It has a very young and diverse population that makes you feel welcome as a foreigner or exchange student. There is a nice warm, Mediterranean climate that is really nice to have as a change, especially if you are used to a more rainy climate like in the Netherlands.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

Make sure to start in a timely matter with all the paperwork that needs to be handled for the whole exchange so you are able to take your time for it.

2016-2017

PREPARATION

exchange application process

The application process I thought was the most difficult part of the whole process because I was not sure which city to choose because you had so many options. I would recommend to look at the course offerings especially, because that helps with terminating a few cities because they only offer courses in their mother tongue for instance. The UU reports of other students also helped me to make a choice for my top 3 universities.

counselling & support at Utrecht University



The counselling & support at Utrecht University is absolutely great! If you have any questions you can call or email them and will get a sufficient answer in no time! I would suggest to ask your questions if you have any because it helped me tremendously.

academic preparation

I didn't prepare anything academically. I passed all my courses in Utrecht and looked at the course offering in Barcelona. Because you're not exactly sure which courses are actually given and in which language I actually changed everything in the first 2 weeks when I was there, which was no problem.

language preparation

I had in mind to do a Spanish course before going to Barcelona, but in the vacation I wasn't able anymore so I came there with no knowledge of the Spanish language. That was totally fine. Nevertheless I would recommend to know some Spanish before going there, but more because it is usefull in your everyday life. I followed a Spanish course at the Uni in Barcelona and that was great! I even got some ECTS extra because of the course.

finances

I worked when I was still in Utrecht and made sure that I had a sufficient bank account before I went. That was actually necessary because the rent was pretty expensive for me and your daily life (going out and having drinks) made it very expensive. I think you could get a cheaper appartement but I had a bit of bad luck with searching for an appartement.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)

The study programme was really different than I was used to in Utrecht. I had to be on the University everyday for a couple of hours and the lectures where very classical like high school instead of the 'werkgroepen' you get in Utrecht. That was a big difference but it was okay. The courses were much more easy than I was used to so I managed to pass third year courses of another faculty without any trouble. The course offering on the website can change before you get there so in the first two weeks it is likely that you have to change courses, but the university will help you with everything when you get there.

academic quality of education activities

The academic quality really depended on which course you were taking and the teacher. I had some courses from which I really learned new things, but also courses which were very easy to pass and to understand. All the teachers were very happy to help and did their best. It really depends on which courses you take which quality they had.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

The counselling & support at UPF was really great. You could email them with any questions and they would reply to you the same day with everything you needed. If you have any questions, don't hesitate to ask them because most of the websites are in Spanish so it is difficult to understand.

transfer of credits

The credits were the same as in Utrecht so I had no problem transferring the credits. Just make sure that you know how many credits you have to get and how many the receiving university is advising you to get in the period abroad. I didn't notice that UPF has trimesters in stead of semesters, so I had to get 30 ECTS in a period of 2/3 of what is normally the period to get 30 ECTS. Because the level of the courses was lower, that was actually okay.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme



The welcome & orientation programme was usefull at the university. You had a big Erasmus group which were doing all kinds of things in the first weeks. That was nice to meet new people.

accommodation

I had trouble to find accommodation because I was looking with 3 other girls, which made it much more expensive for us than if you search for just a room in a student house. I would recommend to join every facebook group which offers rooms in Barcelona. There are many and they are very usefull.

leisure & culture

Barcelona is a great city! It is relatively cheap and the atmosphere is awesome! The city has much to offer and if you know a bit of Spanish the people are really nice to you! I personally think that Barcelona is the best city to go to on exchange in Europe! I would definitely choose the same city again if I could do it again!

suggestions/tips

Go to Barcelona!

CONCLUSIONS

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

Yes! The level was lower than in Utrecht so you could take a lot of courses from other faculties aswell and the counselling is very good on both sides! Barcelona is a great city for going out and if you like the good wheater so I think it is the best city to go to on your Erasmus exchange!

do you have any additional advice or comments?

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