

Germany - Berlin - Freie Universität Berlin**2018-2019****Report 1**

faculty/college	Humanities
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	Liberal Arts and Sciences

destination city & country	Berlin, Germany
name university abroad	Freie Universität Berlin
start date	01 / 09 / 2018 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	15 / 02 / 2019 (dd/mm/yyyy)

You are requested to write on the following topics. Text boxes will expand automatically while typing!

PREPARATION	
exchange application process	
	The process of applying is easy but takes some time. Plan a day or a couple of hours to do this.
counselling & support at Utrecht University	
	The counselling at Utrecht University is very nice. With any question you can go to the International Office.
academic preparation	
	I did not have to do any academic preparation since there were no academic requirements for the Freie Universität Berlin.
language preparation	
	I took a German class at the Volksuniversiteit Utrecht, and in Berlin I did the Vorkurs.
finances	
	I made some calculations in advance of my departure, but I did not have to save a lot of money since Berlin is not really expensive and I already had my normal savings for back up.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD	
study programme (content and organisational issues)	
	This was very difficult to understand. At the Freie they do not publish the courses that will be given that semester, only prior to the semester. This gave me a lot of stress since I did not know which courses there were going to be.
academic quality of education activities	
	I enjoyed the education of the receiving university very much. It surprised me how much the education system differed from that in Utrecht. It was way more encouraging and open for discussion than in Utrecht.
counselling & support at receiving university abroad	
	I send a lot of emails in relation to my stress. The receiving university had a great international office that helped me and always sent an email back.

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transfer of credits

That is still going on. There is not really such thing as a deadline for grading in Berlin, which is quite inconvenient when you're an exchange student.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

The welcoming programme was very nice. I already did the Vorkurs before the semester started, which I can advise to everyone. You will meet a lot of nice people and your German improves a lot.

accommodation

The Freie Universität gave the option for accommodation which I did not take. I wanted to find my own house in Berlin, which worked out really well.

leisure & culture

At the Vorkurs we did cultural activities almost everyday. This was very nice since you could get to know people, the city and the language.

suggestions/tips

Do the Vorkurs (the language course before the semester starts). And find your own house via WG. The accommodation of the university is very far out of the city centre of Berlin (takes around an hour).

CONCLUSIONS

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

Yes very much. The Freie Universität is a really nice university and the different approach in education has brought me a lot.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

Also take courses at other universities in Berlin. You can take up to 40% of your courses at different universities. I took two really nice courses at the Humboldt Universität which I enjoyed very much.

**2017-2018
 Report 1**

e-mail address	<i>optional; only if you don't mind students preparing for study abroad contacting you directly</i> e.bijl@students.uu.nl
faculty/college	Humanities
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	German language and culture

destination city & country	Berlin, Germany
name university abroad	Freie Universität Berlin
start date	04 / 10 / 2017 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	16 / 02 / 2018 (dd/mm/yyyy)

You are requested to write on the following topics. Text boxes will expand automatically while typing!

PREPARATION	
exchange application process	The application process for Erasmus was quite complicated and involved quite a lot of administrative tasks. I could apply for three universities, of which Freie Universität Berlin was my first choice. After having heard I was accepted, I had to start preparing documents for both universities; luckily the FU has Distributed Campus, a system which explained the application process step-by-step.
counselling & support at Utrecht University	The International Office of Utrecht University was always ready to answer any questions I had, concerning my stay abroad and were very helpful.
academic preparation	I did not really prepare for my study abroad; after three years of studying German language and culture, I felt ready to go study in Germany.
language preparation	At home I study German language and culture, so for me it was not necessary to do any language course before coming to Berlin.
finances	I had been setting aside money some months in advance, because I did not want to have to worry about it in Berlin. Then I made some preparations to have a bit of extra money: I applied for the DAAD-scholarship (which unfortunately I did not get), the Erasmus-scholarship and through DUO I arranged that - since I would not use public transportation anymore in the Netherlands - I would receive financial compensation for that.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD	
study programme (content and organisational issues)	I chose six courses in total (for 30 ECTS): half of them were part of "Deutsche Philologie", these were quite difficult and I studied among regular students; half of them were part of a module offered especially to foreign

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students, these courses were easier and were a great way to meet other international students. My courses were mostly related to German literature, linguistics and history/culture.

academic quality of education activities

Though I thought the courses offered only to exchange students were a bit too easy, they did offer a great introduction to several aspects of German culture and history. I was very pleased with the academic quality of the courses I followed with Deutsche Philologie.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

It was quite hard sometimes to figure out who I had to turn when I needed help with something. However, with the help of my teachers and the International Office at FU, I always managed to handle everything in the end.

transfer of credits

The transfer of credits was very easy: if I successfully completed all my courses here, I would receive 5 ECTS for each, totalling up to 30. This is the same amount of ECTS I would normally have to acquire in a semester at Utrecht.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

The courses at FU started somewhere mid-October; for foreign students there was an orientation programme at the start of October. This was spread over a couple of days and mostly included meetings, which explained how everything at the university worked. There was also a possibility to participate in a boat trip, where you could meet other students and which turned out to be very fun. Overall, I was a bit disappointed as there was little organised concerning social activities.

accommodation

Through the university I applied for a room in a student dormitory. I ended up in one in Lankwitz: there were both German and foreign students there, which made a nice mix; there were many services such as a gym, washing room, common room and even a student bar. It was located quite far from what you could call Berlin's city centre (about 30-60 minutes by public transportation), but the rent was relatively low and I had a great time there.

leisure & culture

Berlin is a brilliant city with lots of different things to offer for everyone: nightlife, culture, nice parks, interesting cities relatively close (Leipzig, Dresden, Hamburg, Budapest, Prague, etc.). I have enjoyed my time in Berlin very much.

suggestions/tips

Read up on time on things that need to be done in Germany specifically. For instance, how to register as a resident in the city, read up on how to get wifi in your accommodation (this turned out to be quite hard) and similar things.

CONCLUSIONS

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

I certainly would: the academic standards at FU were good, they offered interesting courses and Berlin as a city is a great place to stay, and for a large city not that expensive (especially in comparison to places like Paris, London or Vienna).

do you have any additional advice or comments?

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Report 2

e-mail address	<i>optional; only if you don't mind students preparing for study abroad contacting you directly</i> h.m.brokking@students.uu.nl
faculty/college	Humanities
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	German language & culture (Duitse taal en cultuur)

destination city & country	Berlin, Germany
name university abroad	Freie Universität Berlin
start date	01 / 04 / 2018 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	20 / 07 / 2018 (dd/mm/yyyy)

You are requested to write on the following topics. Text boxes will expand automatically while typing!

PREPARATION	
exchange application process	<p>First you had to attend a meeting with all students interested in a period of exchange. Then the application came around. You first had to apply online (through "Osiris") and then you had to write down a 1st, 2nd and 3rd choice where you would like to go. Then, you had to write a time-schedule of all the courses you thought you were going to take during the course of your studies (for me it was during my Bachelors). Also, you had to make a financial estimation for during your exchange (income and outcomes). Finally, you also had to write a letter of motivation to the university you would like to attend. Then, months later (for some even half a year later) the application process started. You follow up all the instructions given by the International Office from the home university and also from the guest university abroad. With that it kind of speaks for itself what you have to do in order to properly start your period of exchange.</p>
counselling & support at Utrecht University	<p>Utrecht University has a few counselling "points". The biggest one I would say is the International Office. They organise the whole exchange and they are mediating between you and the university abroad when necessary. They provide you with all the information needed and will answer all the additional questions that come up along the process. Also your counselor/tutor from your own studies will help you. They mostly coordinate the content of the courses abroad and tell you what courses would be smart to take. Obviously also for additional question on this content they will help you.</p>
academic preparation	<p>There are certain seminars that will prepare you for your time abroad. It is wise to attend these, especially when you have never done anything like this before. Also, in the country of stay there perhaps are options to take language courses and in my opinion it is always wise to at least attend the basic classes, also in order to make contact with other students.</p> <p>If talking about other academic preparations I am not sure there were any in my case. It was wise to read up on the guest university and find out rather sooner than later how they approach academic problems and/or how they teach at that university. There might be an option to get in contact with attending students at the</p>

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receiving university by sending an email to the coordinator of the exchange programme abroad.
language preparation
There are certain courses you can take at home to prepare for the language spoken in the country you will be visiting for your exchange. But if I remember correctly there are no specific courses offered by the home university. There are on the other hand courses you can take abroad, at least at the university I attended. With visiting a big metropolitan city (Berlin in my case) comes that it is very easy to take language classes. In my case it was German. Since I already speak German fluently, I did not attend these courses, but I did hear from many people that it has been a great way to start their exchange. The courses helped them to build up their confidence within the language, but also to meet people that are also about to start their exchange.
finances
As explained, you have to set up a financial plan beforehand. This will give you a good insight into the ways of living in the city and country abroad. In my case the German expenses are similar to the Dutch ones. But especially when you go further abroad, it will be necessary to be prepared for all the kinds of expenses that you might or definitely will have. My tip is to write down exactly what you think you might want to spend and look up online where you can buy certain products and how much they cost. Also with other activities you have to remember that you are maybe spending more than you are used to, because you are visiting a new place and you might want to participate in more activities than you regularly do. In my case I want to add that Germany is mostly cheaper to live in than the Netherlands. Especially the groceries cost a lot less than back home.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)
I mostly attended courses from the German philology. I was enrolled in the Dutch philology because of the contract, but for my studies it was mandatory for me to get at least 15 ECTS points within the department of German. I ended up taking 30 ECTS points (which is common if you are going away for a semester) and I additionally took a class about the German way of living, just because I thought it would be very interesting. This was a special course just for exchange students. I would encourage anybody to try and attend these courses, because they are very interesting and also a good way to meet other people who are foreign. When it comes to the courses within the department of German philology I really enjoyed those too. They were very interesting and it is also neat to see that these courses sometimes have a totally different set up than at my home university, even though it was within the same studies.
academic quality of education activities
When it comes to the quality of education activities I have to say that this is very hard to explain. One thing I can say for sure is that the approaches of the universities (as far as I could tell) are not always similar. I would say that the way the German students work is very different from the Dutch way, in the sense that there is more time for a course, because they have a semester instead of a quarter, like we have at Utrecht University, which gives them more time to be working with the content of the courses. I would say that this sometimes gives a more relaxed atmosphere within the classes, which was good to embrace. On the other hand I think that Dutch students sometimes get more done than German students. The workload is generally higher and it makes them a bit more focused at times. All in all I would say that the outcome is the same. German students in the end do learn the same amount as Dutch students, I would just say that there is a different approach on how they achieve that.
counselling & support at receiving university abroad
The receiving university and its staff were very polite, kind and helpful. With any kind of question that I had I was able to come during their office hours or write them an E-Mail. It was a very nice environment to be

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welcomed in. Also a lot of students tend to want to help you, when you ask them to. And also the teachers are very welcoming for any kind of question. They will provide you with all the information needed. For all the forms (signed e.d.) you will need your coordinator from Erasmus at your home, but also at the receiving university. They will make sure the forms are official.

transfer of credits

By the end of the semester (your time abroad) you will have to record everything very well (especially at German Universities you are lucky that they like to organise everything well). Before going abroad you will have to make an estimation as to what courses you will attend abroad. Not for all universities this will be possible, because certain universities (for example most German ones) don't show the courses offered in a particular semester until a few weeks beforehand. In that case you will have to look at the courses offered in earlier semesters to make an estimation. Then when you actually are abroad and you know for sure what courses you are attending, you will have to revise your learning agreement. This is important in order to still be able to get the Grant awarded to you from Erasmus+. But you also have to make sure that the courses are being accepted at your home university. In my case I could fill out a form that is being sent to the committee for education. This committee will make a decision if all courses can be brought back to the home university in order to achieve your degree. This means that by the end you will need to have a so called transcript of records. This form will make it able to transfer the credits achieved abroad to your home university.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

As partially explained before, the receiving university was very welcoming. The incoming department of the international office organised a lot of trips to all sorts of places in and around Berlin. Unfortunately I could not attend the earlier ones, because I still had to finish my 3rd quarter at the University of Utrecht. But also later on there were a lot of activities that you could participate in and meet new people. All these people were also exchange students from all over the world. It was not until about three weeks later that I met the actual German students.

On top of that there was an international club. You could join them for 10 Euros per semester or 15 Euros per two semesters and it gave you a lot of percent off on several kinds of trips and activities they organised. It was very fun, because this way I for example took a day trip to Stettin, a city in Poland.

Also, there was a language programme, but I was not able to attend, also because the courses at University Utrecht were still going.

accommodation

This is not true for all of Germany, but because I moved to a bigger city it is always harder to find proper and affordable accommodation. The university does provide the opportunity to sign up for student housing. You can apply and it is the principle of first come first serve. You have to pay a certain amount (if I am not mistaking the first month of rent) and that way you are able to find a proper living space. The only down side about that to me was the distance to the center of the city. The FU Berlin is already quite far away from downtown Berlin, but the student dorms are even further away. That is why I decided to try and search for a student dorm not provided through the university. There are several websites to find these WG's (Wohngemeinschaften = student dorms), the most known one is written in the part "suggestions/tips" underneath.

leisure & culture

As maybe already expected there are so many things you can do within Berlin. The city is very laid-back, especially during the summer. There are a lot of different sides to the city, which makes it very welcoming to all sorts of people with all sorts of interests. I would definitely say it is a wonderful experience living in this city! Through the university there are a lot of options to sign up for sports or other activities. But also apart from

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that you just have to google any sorts of activities and many suggestions will come up.

suggestions/tips

- Website to find student dorm: www.wg-gesucht.de
- Google anything and the wished information will come up. So I would say that you use it to your advantage and so this way you can find anything you would like to see or do!
- Use social media to find nice places to eat, hang out, shop etc. Also, through Facebook (or the app: facebook local) you can find all sorts of activities you might want to participate in
- the website meetup.com maybe has some interesting activities or gatherings you want to participate in. This website is open to everyone, so not just students.
- Try and go out as much as you can, even when you are alone. You only get to know a city by exploring yourself. Also, this way you maybe meet new people.
- Participate in every activity offered by the university. At first you might not be good at meeting new people from all over the world, but it will make your exchange to a success.

CONCLUSIONS

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

There is no doubt: this exchange was one of the best things I have done so far. I would recommend going on exchange in general to everyone. On top of that I would for sure recommend the university I attended and the city I lived in. Berlin has so many great things to offer, I think that everyone would feel welcome here, even if you are not used to or don't like the big city.

The university has a very good feeling to it; it makes everyone feel welcome, accepted an enthusiastic to academically learn more!

do you have any additional advice or comments?

Be prepared for bigger changes during your exchange, but don't be afraid to see that as a positive thing. You will learn a lot from it and not just academically! It will maybe even help you figure better what sort of studies you want to follow later on or what sort of career you want to have in life!

Also, try and just follow the rules of exchanges. If there is a deadline: Make it easier on everyone and hand it in on time. Mostly it are easy things to do and you will feel better then and you can check it off of your to-do list!

Report 3

e-mail address	<i>optional; only if you don't mind students preparing for study abroad contacting you directly</i> lauren.stoevenbeld@gmail.com
faculty/college	Languages, literature and communication
level	<input type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	Comparative Literary Studies

destination city & country	Berlin, Germany
name university abroad	Freie Universität Berlin
start date	04 / 09 / 2017 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	01 / 02 / 2018 (dd/mm/yyyy)

You are requested to write on the following topics. Text boxes will expand automatically while typing!

PREPARATION	
exchange application process	
	The application process was not that difficult, but a lot of work and rather bureaucratic. At times, it made me feel quite stressed, hoping that the exchange would be worth all the trouble. I heard quite quickly that I had been accepted, both from the UU and the FU. Luckily, I got into the programme of my first choice.
counselling & support at Utrecht University	
	The International Office at the UU seems to have very good intentions and do their best to help you, but because there are so many exchange options they know little about specific universities and could therefore not always be of help. In the end, I could not really base my choice for the FU on much more than a course catalogue of which no one knew whether it would still be the same during my exchange (spoiler: it was not) and the city of Berlin. With any questions about general procedures, however, they were helpful.
academic preparation	
	I did not prepare in any special way because I expected the level of the courses at the FU to be about the same as at the UU. This turned out to be indeed the case.
language preparation	
	I studied very hard to get my German to the level I needed to take courses at the FU. With only two years of highschool German, I started studying about a year before my exchange. I took online courses, did exercises from a grammar book, read novels in German and watched German films. After this, my level of German was about B2. I then took an amazing intensive language course at the FU during the six weeks before the start of the semester. This brought my level up to C1, which was sufficient to follow lectures in German and prepare German readings for seminars. Participating in discussions and writing were still quite challenging. Luckily I was allowed to write papers and hold solo presentations in English. I really enjoyed learning a new language and I think it is actually the most valuable thing I have learnt during my exchange. However, I would not recommend applying for an exchange at the FU without a good command of German to everyone. It takes a lot of time and discipline to prepare sufficiently and your exchange experience will probably not be very fun nor educational if you don't succeed at acquiring at least a B2 level in German.
finances	
	I financed my exchange through a combination of an Erasmus+ grant, student loans and personal savings. For me it was not actually very expensive because my room in Berlin was a lot cheaper than my room in Utrecht.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD	
study programme (content and organisational issues)	
	The study programme of the FU is not well organized compared to the UU. The upside of this is that the university is quite flexible, the downside is that it can leave you clueless. The courses that were available when I applied for my exchange were all gone when I went on exchange. I had to pick all new courses. I found this out four weeks before the start of the semester; only then was the course catalogue updated. Luckily I still found some interesting courses. The course catalogue does not say how many EC you can get for a course, which is very inconvenient. If you want to know this you have to email the teacher, but they can change their mind, as happened to me. For one course I was told I could get 10 EC, but in the end I got only 6. The amount of EC also varies in accordance with the amount and length of assignments you do for a course. I would say that, to get 30 EC, you would have to take about 4 courses per semester, with courses ranging from about 5 to 10 EC. Another good thing to know is that master students will usually not get credits from the UU if they take any of the

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courses that are especially for exchange students, because those courses are at bachelor level.
academic quality of education activities
The academic level of the FU is about the same as that of the UU, but the tempo is much lower. What I would normally learn during one block at the UU was now spread out over an entire semester at the FU. During the semester I never had to work very hard. However, all exams and papers build up at the end of the semester and by then the third block in Utrecht will already have begun. So during the final weeks I did have to work hard.
counselling & support at receiving university abroad
The teachers were helpful and accomodating to international students. Due to personal circumstances, I had to leave Berlin a few weeks before the intended end of my exchange and the international office at the FU was very supportive and helped me arrange all necessary things.
transfer of credits
I cannot tell yet. Because my last deadline at the FU was at the end of March, the whole process is taking quite long.

STUDENT LIFE
welcome & orientation programme
The international office organizes a lot of activities. I did not participate in these because I had already been at the university for 6 weeks to do a language course and during that course I already made friends and explored the university and the city.
accommodation
I lived in a student dorm, arranged via the university. I was a nice room and very cheap, but the location wasn't great: on the very edge of Berlin in a quiet residential area. But the public transport in Berlin is good and it was only half an hour away from the university. Because Berlin is so big, there is always something that is far away, no matter where you live.
leisure & culture
Berlin is an amazing city. There is always something to do and every neighbourhood has its own character. No matter your preferences, you will find something to enjoy: museums, clubs, big parks, shops, demonstrations, sports. Even after half a year, I still had the feeling I hadn't seen everything yet, so I would love to come back some time.
suggestions/tips
If you don't already study German, take the Vorkurs Deutsch before the semester. You will improve your German vastly, get to know lots of international people and go on interesting excursions during the afternoons.

CONCLUSIONS
would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain
I would not especially recommend the university. The course were alright, but I feel I could have learnt more at the UU. Moreover, finding the right courses, with enough EC, was very chaotic. I would, however, recommend the city. Berlin fully made up for its university and I really enjoyed learning a new language.
do you have any additional advice or comments?
Try to get some extra credits during your first (and for bachelor students second) year, so that if at the FU you can't do the courses you had planned to do or do not get as many credits as you initially thought, you can still

graduate on time. This really saved me.

Report 4

e-mail address	<i>optional; only if you don't mind students preparing for study abroad contacting you directly</i> l.j.ritmeester@students.uu.nl
faculty/college	Humanities
level	<input type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	History

destination city & country	Berlin, Germany
name university abroad	Freie Universität Berlin
start date	04 / 09 / 2017 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	16 / 02 / 2018 (dd/mm/yyyy)

You are requested to write on the following topics. Text boxes will expand automatically while typing!

PREPARATION	
exchange application process	The process was structured well and clear.
counselling & support at Utrecht University	Support from the IO was good
academic preparation	I cannot say a lot about this
language preparation	I did a summer course in Germany to freshen up my skills
finances	Parents + Erasmus grant. I also applied for a grant at the Duitsland Insituut, which I got (however, I only heard so when I already was in Berlin)

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD	
study programme (content and organisational issues)	The content was alright. Organisationally, the Freie Universität was, or rather, German universities as a whole are quite strange. A lot of bureacracy, many things cannot be done online (for many courses I could not register myself online). Moreover, it is a hassle that the course catalogue at the FU was published end of August, as semester only starts mid-October. So you have to be flexible
academic quality of education activities	

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The programme in Utrecht was better. Courses were not bad, but often tended to be superficial in comparison to what I was used to. What did not help was that courses were shorter in length and the number of participants was higher than in my own programme.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

We were received well and the FU gave a lot of information about course registration, etcetera.

transfer of credits

Still has to be done

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

Not really great. Although I already got to know the university and city through my pre-semester language course. I would definitely recommend following such a course. It is a perfect way to get to know German, the city and to make friends.

accommodation

Getting accommodation in Berlin is challenging. I eventually found a nice room in a cool neighbourhood. I would not recommend the FU's housing, which is really far out of the city centre (1-1,5 hours)

leisure & culture

Berlin is an amazing city. So many things to do and see. I can definitely recommend going there.

suggestions/tips

Start looking for housing on time. Housing market in Berlin is horrible

CONCLUSIONS

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

Yes I would, but not necessarily for academic quality. You should mainly go there for personal development, experiencing a new academic culture or to get to know Berlin. I say Berlin on purpose, if you want to experience proper Germany, Berlin might not be the best destination. The city is very international and not very German.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

2016 – 2017**Report 1**

faculty/college	Humanities
level	<input type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	Modern History (1500–2000)
destination city & country	Berlin, Germany
name university abroad	Freie Universität Berlin

start date	01 / 09 / 2016 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	18 / 02 / 2017 (dd/mm/yyyy)

You are requested to write on the following topics. Text boxes will expand automatically while typing!

PREPARATION	
exchange application process	
	The application process is not that difficult and pretty straightforward, I didn't really have any trouble with it.
counselling & support at Utrecht University	
	The International Office of the faculty of Humanities has been a great help every time I had a question, before and during my stay abroad.
academic preparation	
	The most important preparation was finding out which courses I wanted to take at the FU and how much ECTS I could earn with them. Because the course catalogue for the new semester becomes available only about 4 weeks before the semester starts, you can expect to be taking different courses than you might have filled in on your study plan. In my case, none of the courses I had chosen on my study plan were available any more. Also it is important to contact teachers at the FU on how much ECTS you can earn with their course, because this system is very different from the UU and you can earn a different amount by doing different examinations for every course, which is very confusing.
language preparation	
	Before I went abroad I went to a week long language course of the Duitslandinstituut in Amsterdam, which is specifically designed for students going abroad. This was more to dust up my old knowledge of German. At the FU I followed the language Vorkurs, which is a 6 week programme before the teachings start in Berlin. For me this was necessary and very helpful way to improve my German
finances	
	I saved some money beforehand and had an Erasmus scholarship and a student-loan. Although Berlin is a cheap city, you tend to spend more money than you do at home.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD	
study programme (content and organisational issues)	
	It is quite difficult to understand all the different sorts of courses you can follow and how they are organized, I had to inform myself by contacting the teachers who gave the courses. What is nice about the FU is that the first two weeks you can try all sorts of different courses and decide afterwards which ones you actually want to keep doing. Also when you aren't able to sign up for a course through the FU's system, you can just go to the course and speak to the teacher and most of the time he will allow you to take the course and get credit for it. This just takes a little more paperwork.

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academic quality of education activities
The academic quality is pretty good, I would say a little less than at the UU, but still very good. The main difference in the way of teaching is that more active participation is asked of the students in the form of presentations and discussions. The teachers more or less let the students prepare the classes.
counselling & support at receiving university abroad
As far as I have needed any counseling and support it has been sufficient.
transfer of credits
I didn't get my grades yet so still waiting on the transfer.

STUDENT LIFE
welcome & orientation programme
The Erasmus welcome and orientation programme is not that good actually. It gives a lot of information on the university and the study but it is quite superficial. This is also because the group of international students is very big. However, I followed the Vorkurs which enabled me to get to know a lot of new people, the university and the city. They have a cultural programme which is really nice to visit all sorts of places like the Bundestag or Potsdam. You spend six weeks with the same people and get to know one another pretty well. It is much more intimate and valuable than the general orientation days.
accommodation
I got a room at the Internationales Studienzentrum Berlin (ISB), which is really cheap for a pretty nice room and a pretty good location close to public transport. If I had a choice I would have probably tried to get a room more into the city (Neukölln), but this is very difficult and more expensive. However, the ISB is much better than living in one of the Studentendorfen the FU provides for Erasmus students, which are far outside of the city and don't have a lot of good public transport lines in the neighbourhood. It can take between an hour and an hour and a half to get to the city from there, while from the ISB it is 30 minutes, which is not bad for such a large city as Berlin.
leisure & culture
It's Berlin, you can do anything in this city. Enjoy the restaurants, the bars, the nightlife. Go to the many museums or picknick in one of the many parks. In the end I didn't even have enough time to do all the things I wanted to do/see.
suggestions/tips
Sign up for the Vorkurs, these first six weeks are so much fun. You learn German, but in a very intimate and cosy setting. You get the opportunity to see all sorts of things with the cultural programme. But most importantly, you get to know a lot of new people and you have six weeks to explore the city with each other before the teachings start and the actual schoolwork starts. Classes are until 1 pm, so after that you have all the time in the world to see the city, visit its lakes and socialize. Most of my friends I've spent time with in Berlin, I got to know during the Vorkurs. Another tip: try to get a room in some of the nicer neighbourhoods of Berlin (Neukölln, Kreuzberg) to really get

Germany - Berlin - Freie Universität Berlin

a taste of the city and don't get a room at one of the Studentendorfen. You might take longer to get to the university, but the atmosphere is so much better in the city and you are close to all the fun places.

CONCLUSIONS

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

I would definitely recommend the university and the destination. The FU has a very different way of teaching which was interesting to experience. Berlin is just a wonderful place and everyone should experience living there.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

Report 2

faculty/college	Universiteit Utrecht
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	Duitse taal en cultuur

destination city & country	Berlin, Germany
name university abroad	FU Berlin
start date	04 / 04 / 2017 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	21 / 07 / 2017 (dd/mm/yyyy)

You are requested to write on the following topics. Text boxes will expand automatically while typing!

PREPARATION

exchange application process

Dit was een zeer eenvoudig proces vond ik. Na de voorlichting was het duidelijk welke stappen ondernomen moesten worden via Osiris. Het schrijven van een goede motivatiebrief is hetgeen waar wel even tijd en denkwerk in gaat zitten.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

Zeer tevreden over dit punt. Goede voorlichtingen en wanneer er problemen/vragen waren was er snel en gemakkelijk contact te krijgen met het international office.

academic preparation

De opleiding Duitse taal en cultuur bereidt hun studenten naar mijn mening goed voor. De academische basis voor een studie aan een Duitse universiteit wordt gegeven.

language preparation

Door opleiding al een passend niveau in de taal van het gastland en de universiteit.

finances

Door het inleveren van de balans vooraf word je gedwongen na te denken over je budget. Dit vind ik erg goed. Ik moet wel zeggen dat een exchange met alleen de beurs niet te financieren valt. Ik heb wel zelf flink moeten

bijdragen en dit maakt een exchange niet voor iedereen mogelijk.
--

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)

Ik heb verschillende vakken speciaal voor ERASMUS-studenten gevolgd. Deze thema's waren erg interessant en omvatten veel aspecten van de Duitse cultuur. Daarnaast heb ik vakken in het bereik van de literatuurwetenschap gevolgd. Die waren een echte uitdaging voor mij, maar hier gingen de professoren goed mee om.
--

academic quality of education activities
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De vakken speciaal voor ERASMUS-studenten vond ik erg interessant, maar soms was de houding richting de studenten wel wat minder kritisch dan bij de vakken waar reguliere studenten van de FU deelnemen.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad
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Zeer goed. Ook hier is het international office duidelijk, goed te bereiken en erg gastvrij.
--

transfer of credits

Wanneer ik in Duitsland een 1 (NL 10) heb wordt dit in Utrecht omgezet naar een 9. Dit vind ik erg teleurstellend want wanneer ik voor een toets in Duitsland nul fout heb, doordat ik hard heb geleerd, zou ik hier graag dezelfde waardering in punten voor willen krijgen in Utrecht.
--

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

Je leert snel andere studenten en de weg op de universiteit kennen.

accommodation

Minder. Ik heb 5 maanden in een kamer gezeten waar alleen maar verbouwd werd en alles een zooi was om het gebouw. Hiervoor kreeg ik 30 euro ter compensatie, maar het was niet fijn wonen.
--

leisure & culture

Er is altijd wat te doen op het gebied van cultuur, sport en eten.
--

suggestions/tips

-

CONCLUSIONS

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

Ja, academisch interessant, gastvrije universiteit en een geweldige stad!

do you have any additional advice or comments?
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-

Report 3

faculty/college

Humanities/ Geesteswetenschappen

Germany - Berlin - Freie Universität Berlin

level	<input type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	Taal- en cultuurstudies/ language and culturestudies

destination city & country	Berlijn, Duitsland
name university abroad	Freie Universität Berlin
start date	05 / 09 / 2016 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	16 / 02 / 2017 (dd/mm/yyyy)

You are requested to write on the following topics. Text boxes will expand automatically while typing!

PREPARATION	
exchange application process	
	Het is veel werk om een periode in het buitenland te regelen. Vaak is het onduidelijk wat er precies gedaan moet worden. Alhoewel er genoeg mailtjes over rond gaan, blijft het lastig om door de bomen het bos te zien.
counselling & support at Utrecht University	
	Ik vond het prettig dat ik altijd snel antwoord heb gekregen op mijn vragen omtrent de uitwisseling. Hierdoor ben ik nooit echt tegen problemen aangelopen.
academic preparation	
	Er wordt niet echt veel aangeboden om je voor te bereiden op de uitwisseling, maar ik geloof ook niet dat dat nodig is. Ik ben naar een voorlichting geweest. Maar daar werd alles voorgelezen van de Powerpoint, hierdoor vond ik dat ook niet erg nuttig.
language preparation	
	Ik heb zelf vorig jaar bij Babel Instituut een taalcursus gevolgd om mij voor te bereiden op het taalniveau aan de universiteit in Berlijn. Dit heb ik gedaan doordat we duidelijk geïnformeerd waren over het niveau dat we talig zouden moeten hebben. Daarnaast vind ik het goed dat we zoveel online taaltesten hebben moeten doen. Hierdoor word je gestimuleerd met de taal bezig te zijn maar heb je ook een idee van het groeiproces.
finances	
	Een uitwisseling kost veel geld, meer dan dat ik had verwacht. Met alleen een beurs red je het niet, maar het is een welkome bijdrage om de maandelijkse lasten mee te kunnen bekostigen.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD	
study programme (content and organisational issues)	
	Allereerst zou ik vakken bij Filmstudies gaan volgen. Hier kon ik echter, als zijnde uitwisselingstudent, niet terecht omdat de docenten dat niet toelieten. Dit vond ik in het begin erg frustrerend. Uiteindelijk heb ik besloten zoveel mogelijk over de Duitse taal en cultuur op te willen doen, dus heb ik taalcursussen en cultureelhistorische cursussen gevolgd.
academic quality of education activities	
	Het niveau van de lessen lag een beetje lager dan in Utrecht. Toch was het nog steeds lastig genoeg doordat je uit de voeten moet met een taal die niet de moedertaal is. Al met al heb ik erg veel geleerd. Dit ook doordat er veel excursies plaatsvinden. Het is dus een actieve manier van studeren.

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counselling & support at receiving university abroad
De mensen waren duidelijk en bereid om vragen te beantwoorden. Net als de hulp die geboden wordt in Utrecht, vond ik de hulp in Berlijn ook erg goed. Snel en duidelijke antwoorden, waar je als uitwisselingsstudent veel aan hebt!
transfer of credits
Dit ging goed. Het duurt even en je moet het goed in de gaten houden, maar beide universiteiten zijn goed georganiseerd dus dat verliep redelijk vlekkeloos.

STUDENT LIFE	
welcome & orientation programme	Doordat ik een pre-semestercursus gevolgd heb, was de kennismaking met de stad en universiteit erg goed en prettig. De universiteit was nog rustig, omdat de normale studenten nog niet begonnen waren met het semester. Hierdoor hadden wij, als nieuwelingen, de tijd om de universiteit te verkennen.
accommodation	Ik heb via NGB-living een kamer gevonden. Zij waren beleefd en hielden zich aan afspraken. Ik zat op een goede locatie (Kreuzberg) en de kamer werd netjes opgeleverd.
leisure & culture	Ronduit geweldig. Berlijn verveeld nooit en ik kan nog honderd keer terug en nog niet alles gezien hebben.
suggestions/tips	Doe mee aan de uitjes die de universiteit aanbiedt! Dit betekent: mensen leren kennen en een gratis rondleiding krijgen.

CONCLUSIONS	
would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain	Ja, zeker! Historisch gezien is deze locatie onuitputtelijk en daarnaast heerst er in Berlijn een optimistische en toekomstgerichte sfeer. Daarnaast ben ik de Duitse taal ontzettend gaan waarderen!
do you have any additional advice or comments?	Laat je niet beïnvloeden. Wat jij wilt is goed genoeg en er zijn altijd mensen die daar hetzelfde over denken. :)

Report 4

faculty/college	Humanities
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	German language and culture

destination city & country	Berlin, Germany
name university abroad	Freie Universität Berlin
start date	01 / 04 / 2017 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	01 / 08 / 2017 (dd/mm/yyyy)

You are requested to write on the following topics. Text boxes will expand automatically while typing!

PREPARATION
exchange application process
I found the application process a lot of paperwork, but it was manageable. It is also a good way to prepare yourself for your exchange.
counselling & support at Utrecht University
I found the support at Utrecht University good, when I wrote an email it never took too long to get a response back.
academic preparation
I felt well prepared for my courses in Berlin.
language preparation
As a German language student, I didn't need a language preparation.
finances
I spent more money than I thought I would. Just because you also do a lot of sightseeing, make trips (also to other cities) you spend more money than you do during a semester at home.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD
study programme (content and organisational issues)
I mostly followed courses especially designed for erasmus students. I found them highly interesting and well organised. The subjects were interesting as they all concerned german culture, literature or films or concerned Berlin. For example, I followed a course about literature in Berlin.
academic quality of education activities
I found the academic quality of the study programme good. I had to write essays as I do in Utrecht. Nevertheless I didn't spend as much time on my studies as I did in Utrecht.
counselling & support at receiving university abroad
The support at the Freie Universität was mostly very good. Only when I had to arrange my Transcript of Records there were some uncertainties.
transfer of credits
At the moment the "Examencommissie" is occupied with the transfer of my credits. The only problematic thing here was, that the semester in Germany ends in July/August. Because I have to finish my studies this year, it was a bit stressful to reach in my grades in time.

STUDENT LIFE
welcome & orientation programme
The orientation programme was good, I immediately met some other students. We got a lot of information about the way things work at Freie Universität.
accommodation

Germany - Berlin - Freie Universität Berlin

I found it quite hard to find a room in Berlin. I found a room in a Student Dorm, which was quite good and near to the university, but far away from the city centre. But the good thing was that I met a lot of people there.

leisure & culture

I loved Berlin for its cultural events and possibilities. There is so much to do and to see, even in one semester you can't visit all the places. There is a range of activities you could do!

suggestions/tips

I also did university sport. That was a nice way to meet more German students.

CONCLUSIONS

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

I would definitely recommend Berlin and the university to others. I loved exploring the city during a longer time and Berlin is never a boring city: there is always something new to discover. With regard to the university, I found the number of interesting courses that were offered really good. I do have the feeling that I learned a lot.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

Report 5

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

destination city & country	Germany, Berlin
name university abroad	Freie Universität Berlin
start date	01 / 04 / 2017 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	21 / 07 / 2017 (dd/mm/yyyy)

You are requested to write on the following topics. Text boxes will expand automatically while typing!

PREPARATION

exchange application process

You need to fill in a lot of forms and write a motivation letter, but besides this, it is actually not that much. You just have to make sure that you start on time with arranging everything, because you need some signs and that might take some time.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

There is support and you can easily make appointments or write an email to the international office. It is however important to know, that you have to arrange everything by yourself. So you need to remark the deadlines yourself as well.

academic preparation

Other than following my bachelor studies in Utrecht, I didn't do any extra preparation.

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language preparation
I took a language course in advance and tried to learn german a bit more by watching german television and reading books in german.
finances
I worked in the months in advance, to spare some money for the exchange. Furthermore I had money on my savings account. Studying abroad is quite expensive, not only because you have to pay rent and you have to register, but also because you're spending more money than usual, because of the trips you're making. Therefore you should take this in account.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)
As an exchange student, you have a lot of freedom in picking your courses. You can pick courses in your major, minor and in the special erasmus courses. Besides this, you are not required to pick modules, but can pick any course freely. There are a lot of interesting courses and espacially the Erasmuscourses are recommendable.
academic quality of education activities
The academic quality is lower as in Utrecht, although it is still good. We espacially didn't have to read that many texts as in Utrecht. The seminars are leaded in a discussion kind of way and you need to prepare yourself to be able to take part in this. Also, in many courses you have to hold a presentation.
counselling & support at receiving university abroad
In Berlin, there is an office which is opened the entire day and where you can come by to ask any question. You can reach them quite easily over the mail as well.
transfer of credits
The German grading system is 1 until 5, of which 1 is the best and all is sufficient until 4. A 5 is insufficient. The marks are somewhat different translated in Utrecht, a 1 for example becomes a 8,5.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme
The welcome and orientation programme at the Freie Universität Berlin was really well organised. They helped you to do the last things needed and gave very much and clear information about studying in Berlin. Besides this, they calculated a lot of time in for questions of any kind and you were able to ask questions afterwards as well.
accommodation
It is really hard to find an accommodation in Berlin. The city became really popular in the last couple of years and therefore exploded, but there are not enough houses for all these people in generall. There are some sites where you can find a room, or WG, but you have to be aware of fake ones. I rented my room in a Studentvillage, which the university informed me about. I am really happy with this accomodation, because everything was arranged quite easily. It is however quite expensive.
leisure & culture
Of course Berlin has got a lof of culture and leisure facillities, more specifically; Berlin has got more museums than rainy days, so you even won't be able to see all of them.
suggestions/tips

Germany - Berlin - Freie Universität Berlin

Try to take some Erasmuscourses, there are made for us Erasmusstudents and really interesting. Because of these courses, it is really easy to get to know other international students as well. Besides this, I would advise you, not to be afraid to take a course in German. One of my best experiences here is learning the language so fast and a course in German can help you with this.

CONCLUSIONS

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

I would certainly recommend the university to others. The Freie Universität is used to receive many exchange students every year and are therefore well prepared and very helpful. Besides this, the courses you can choose are really interesting and you are really free in picking them. And of course Berlin is a great city to live in.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

2015-2016**Report 1**

faculty/college	Humanities
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	German Philology

PREPARATION

exchange application process

The application in Osiris was failry easy. The only thing that was a little bit more difficult was writing a good motivation letter. Because there were only 4 places for Berlin, they would choose people based on their results and motivation letters, so I spent a lot of time on it.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

I didn't need a lot of help for the preparation, as it was fairly easy, but if there were any questions I knew who to e-mail and where to get help.

academic preparation

The subjects I chose before I went to Berlin were not the ones I ended up doing, so everything worked out quite differently in the end.

language preparation

I didn't need to do any language preparation, because I was already proficient in German

finances

The Erasmus grant was really nice to get, and also very needed, because you do spend a lot more money than you would at home. Berlin is a cheap city, so rent and food isn't that expensive, but there are just a lot of nice things to do which cost money.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)

Germany - Berlin - Freie Universität Berlin

Registering for the courses was very easy, the only thing that is a bit difficult is getting your grades on time, because in Germany the teachers can take as much time as they want for correcting something. The content and difficulty of your courses depends on what courses you take.
academic quality of education activities
I think academically the FU is on the same level als Utrecht university
counselling & support at receiving university abroad
There is a lot of support at the University, and there is an office open three days per week where you can go and ask questions. Every student also has a tutor assigned to them, whom you can e-mail or visit to ask stuff.
transfer of credits
My credits haven't been transferred yet, so I don't really know if this goes well

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme
We had four days of introduction, which was very helpful and also nice to meet new people. And there were also a few introduction parties organised, they were also very good to meet new people and make friends.
accommodation
The accomodation provided by the uni is nice and cheap, it is just that they are located outside of the center. And because Berlin is so big it can take upto an hour to get to the center of Berlin from you house. This is why I chose to look for a student room myself, somemwhere closer to the center.
leisure & culture
Berlin is a great place for everything. It has a lot of museums and other cultural things to do, a great nightlife. There is something to do for every type of person and you can also do a lot of things on your own. You don't have to be bored in this city!
suggestions/tips
Find your own accomodation and look on Facebook pages to find cool (free) stuff to do!

CONCLUSIONS

would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain
Yes, I would recommend it. It is a nice university and they offer nice courses. The help you get from there is also good.
do you have any additional advice or comments?
Berlin is a really big city, which is really nice, but can also be overwhelming and sometimes hard to know where all your friends are! Smaller cities will be cosier and easier to hang out with all your Erasmus friends.

Report 2

faculty/college	Humanities
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	German Language & Culture

Germany - Berlin - Freie Universität Berlin

PREPARATION
exchange application process
I've followed the application process and deadlines that have been sent by UU and Erasmus+
counselling & support at Utrecht University
In case of doubt, I've contacted UU through e-mail.
academic preparation
My bachelor programme was sufficient. German study programmes and the level of education don't differ very much from UU.
language preparation
Bachelor courses in German Language and Literature.
finances
Erasmus Grant.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD
study programme (content and organisational issues)
At FU Berlin you can choose your courses after you've visited the first seminar (the first week is a sort of a "shopping week" where you can visit any seminar in order to determine if the course suits you). All programmes are held in German, but there are specific courses for Erasmus students that are either taught in German, or in English. I did two Erasmus courses in German and was a bit disappointed by the elementary level (both content and language level).
academic quality of education activities
High, except for Erasmus and language courses, that don't have many similarities with academic education.
counselling & support at receiving university abroad
FU Berlin is very well organised and there is an infodesk where you can always drop by.
transfer of credits
I haven't finished yet so I don't know (yet).

STUDENT LIFE
welcome & orientation programme
Very useful and clear instructions, but also time to relax and get to know your classmates. There are excursions and events organised by both the Erasmus Committee and the International Club (a membership costs €10)
accommodation
Accommodation can be regulated by University, but I chose to find a room myself, which was considerably harder than I thought. I found a room after one month via a Facebook Group "Nederlanders in Berlijn". So be prepared for a tough search if you decide to not take a room from your University (they are not very well located + only for Erasmus students, which does not improve your German skills in general).
leisure & culture

Germany - Berlin - Freie Universität Berlin

IT IS BERLIN!
suggestions/tips
Du bist verrückt mein Kind, du musst nach Berlin!

CONCLUSIONS
would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain
Absolutely, because of the international and inspiring atmosphere at Freie Universität and in Berlin in general.
do you have any additional advice or comments?

Report 3

faculty/college	Humanities
level	<input type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	Comparative Literary Studies

PREPARATION
exchange application process
Rather easy actually. Motivation Letter is the only thing that probably takes up the most time. Do not let yourself be frightened by all the forms, really it is easier than one may expect. The only thing for me was that there was not yet a Erasmus Literary contract between the FU Berlin and the UU, so I do look back with a bit of a traumatic look, since I had to send billions of emails to make the contract happen.
counselling & support at Utrecht University
Really good, got replies from my emails within a few days. Answers were clear.
academic preparation
Not much really. The courses I was planning on following all related to either my Master's thesis (which I will write immediately after I will return) or reflected to courses I did at the UU
language preparation
Took two language courses at the Babel Institute at Utrecht, mainly to freshen up my knowledge of the German language. Eventhough it is not obligatory to obtain a certain level before going to the FU (highly recommended though), I played it safe (and cheap) and started my language courses in january. When my second B2 course was finished I felt more secure and safe in the german language
finances
not much preparation, had a humble savings account (approx. 700 euros) to cover any unexpected costs. Berlin is cheaper than Utrecht, so one does not necessarily need more money.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD
study programme (content and organisational issues)

Germany - Berlin - Freie Universität Berlin

Even though the FU is pretty well organised, one may have issues with courses that one wants to do outside the faculty. I for example only followed one course within the Literary Studies department, the rest was from theatre studies and english philology. If you follow course outside your "fachbereich" one cannot enroll officially in Campus Management (the german equivalent of osiris), meaning that you have to hand in several forms and need to collect tons of autographs. But apart from that the system here is really convenient: the first two weeks are "shopping weeks" meaning that you can attend several seminars for a few weeks and see if it fits your style and/or interests.

academic quality of education activities

Quality is about the same as the UU, eventhough the teaching methods are a bit different. The classes I took were rather 'democratic' in that the teacher does not really 'teach', but it is rather up to the students to figure out the concepts/texts. This was fun and inspiring, but sometimes also difficult since most of the time the texts needed some explanantion by the teacher, but it was not provided.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

The overall ERASMUS team is okay, they have a big office near the main building. It was a bit hectic in the beginning. I didn't have any contact with the Literary Studies erasmus person. This was quite inconvenient at some times since she would not really answer any of my emails, even when the emails were about the Grant or Learning Agreement

transfer of credits

Still in the process of writing essays, so cannot comment

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

I arrived in August to do a Vorkurs here at the FU, meaning that, when the official orientation programme started (in october), I was already quite used to the FU and was not really impressed by the programme. Its quite 'massive' in that there are simply too many erasmus students for a 'fun' programme. During the Vorkurs, however, there were tons of fun stuff to do: visits to the museums, tours around town etcetera. This was more appealing since the group was smaller and therefore a bit more 'intimate'

accommodation

Be really carefull with this one. You may choose to use the student housing accomodation, but be prepared to live about 30 minutes outside town. I choose to look for a room myself via WG-gesucht (German 'Kamernet') and facebook, and eventually found one on Facebook. I went to check out the room in May (and I highly recommend this, since plenty of people around me got scammed or were utterly dissapointed when they saw the actual room). While living there I noticed that I was not quite satisfied with my roommate nor the area where I lives (a more fancy part), so I decided to look for a new room for the last two months of my stay. I found what is probably the most perfect room in Neukölln, the area where I wanted to live with a really nice girl. So my advice would be to start looking early, check out the room, and once you are there the option is always available to move during your stay there. In this way you have secured a room but you are also allowed to move around for a bit. Be prepared to püay around 400 euros on rent (and probably even more in the next few years, rent prices are going crazy in Berlin)

leisure & culture

don't think I really need to comment here: Berlin is one of the most fun cities to go, be it for the culture, their history, the amazingly big leftist activist sphere, the bars, the clubs. All is within reach.

suggestions/tips

Go visit abandoned lots and places, especially the swimming pool Blub is a fun one to go to.

CONCLUSIONS

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

I would definitely recommend the destination, not necessarily the University. The University did not manage to inspire me, nor did the environment of the University. Sure, some courses were fun, but the teaching methods did not really get me any further. But apart from that living in Berlin has been the greatest and most fun experience so far. Just do it

do you have any additional advice or comments?