

2013-2014

Report 1

preparation
exchange/placement application process
For my preparation, the only thing I had to worry about was the inscription in the Osiris because in Valladolid there were enough places so there wasn't a placement.
counselling/support at home university
I think it was really good the meeting we had before the departing, with all the important things you should know before your departure. Still, it is very different when you are at the host university but the meeting gives you a clear summary of things you should remember during your stay abroad.
academic preparation
I don't believe there is a very important academic preparation. The International Office can help you if you need anything, but I believe going abroad is more something personal than something that you can learn in an academic way.
language preparation
Before I went to Spain, I had Spanish classes at the University. I had TV1 until TV5 but I have to admit that the first weeks at the University in Spain were pretty hard. You really have to get used to the language used by the professors.
finances
I travelled a lot through Spain, so this half a year costed me pretty much. So I can really advise everyone to save money before you go abroad. Everything and every moment was worth the money but without saving, I could not have done everything that I do have done now! With the rent you have to pay, extra costs of the University, food and drinks, going out and going traveling: it costed me much more than I thought before, so that is something very important!
study/placement abroad period
study programme/work plan (concerning content and organisational issues)
I chose History courses in Spain; I always have been interested in History and I really liked the courses in Spain. They really have a different approach in Spain than we have in the Netherlands. I have to admit that it was pretty difficult, to learn all the courses and information of 5 months for an exam.
academic quality of education/placement activities
I believe the academic quality of education in Spain is lower than it is in the Netherlands. Still it was pretty hard for me sometimes; but I think the Spanish students have a better or more relaxed life in Spain than we do in Holland.
counselling/support at host institution/organisation
The support and information at the host institution was very useful and clear. All the people were very nice and you could pass by whenever you wanted.
transfer of credits
I can't say anything about this until now; I have to receive at least 24 ETCS but I have to wait how this goes in the future.

Spain – Universidad de Valladolid

student life
welcome/orientation programme
When I arrived everything was a bit unclear but after the information meeting and with the help of a mentor everything was clear in a week.
accommodation
My accommodation was very good. I can't say I was very lucky with my roommates but you have to find your own friends. I searched for a room by looking on the Internet, and I found a really cosy room!
leisure/culture
The leisure during your Erasmus-stay is (almost) the most important thing during your stay. There are a lot of parties, meetings, drinks etc. I went out a lot of nights. In Holland this is a bit harder to go out often if you have to go to school/work the next day, and abroad you have nothing to worry about but your study and for the rest it is party-time.
suggestions/tips
I only thing I can say; do everything you have ever wanted. Go, travel, have fun, and don't come back with: "I should have done".
conclusions
would you recommend this host organisation/destination to others? please explain
I really love Valladolid, it is a beautiful city. The organisation and city are really good and helpful. Next to this, Valladolid is a great place to learn Spanish, the 'real' castellano. Though; I spent a lot of time with other Erasmus-students, and that is something that I would like to see different. In Valladolid it was hard to get contact with the local people and students. They are not that open as I thought before.
do you have any additional advice or comments?
I can recommend everyone to go abroad; you really get to know yourself when you are on your own! It is an experience you will never forget. As someone said here during one of the first meetings for erasmus: Erasmus really is a life during a very short time.

Report 2

preparation
exchange/placement application process
The application process for my exchange was quite easy. Everything I needed to know was explained well by the University of Utrecht or on the website of the University of Valladolid. I didn't do anything special for the application, I just read everything very good and when I had a doubt I asked the International Office in Utrecht, who were always there to help me in case of questions and doubts.
counselling/support at home university
The International Office of the University of Utrecht explained everything really well during the Information Reunions. Also on the website things are explained very well and, as I said before, I could always ask them if there was something I didn't understand, in the application process and as well during my stay abroad.
academic preparation

Spain – Universidad de Valladolid

I didn't had a academic preparation, because the basics of the University of Valladolid are similar to the ones of the University of Utrecht, the way of teaching and doing exams etc. was all similar to the dutch system.

language preparation

As I study Spanish Language and Culture, I didn't do a language course to prepare myself for my stay abroad in Spain. My classes in Utrecht are also in Spanish, so it wasn't anything strange for me to have classes in that language.

finances

To finance my stay abroad I saved a lot of money I earned with a job I had in the weekend. I also had the Erasmus Grant, but as I also wanted to travel a bit and see more of the country, I saved the money I earned and used that to travel and do some fun things.

study/placement abroad period

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

I took courses at the University of Spain. Being a exchange student, I could choose everything I wanted, so I chose various courses that seemed interesting to me (about American history, European history and Latin-American literature). In the end almost all courses I took were really interesting. Of the 11 courses I took here in Spain, only 2 weren't interesting, but that was because of the teacher. With choosing the courses I didn't had any difficulties. When I arrived the people at the Internacional Office gave me a book with all the courses and the explained where I could find the schedule. So I chose the courses that looked interesting, created a schedule with the hours of class and when I had two classes at the same time, I just went to talk with the teacher and explained that I couldn't be there every class. The teachers in Valladolid are really relaxed and if you just normally explained what the problem was, they helped you. So in the case of having two classes at the same time, they were fine with it when one day you went and the next day you didn't go.

academic quality of education/placement activities

The system in the universities in Spanish is quite different from the dutch one. In both cases it's a teacher who gives classes about a certain subject, but in Utrecht it's normal that the students also participate, whilst in Spain it's normal that the teacher talks a whole hour and the students just sit, listen and take notes. That for me was the biggest and most annoying difference between the both systems, because I prefer to work with the things I just learned, not just listen and do nothing with it. I won't say that the quality at the University of Valladolid is worse than the quality of the University of Utrecht, but there sure is a difference and as I said, I personally prefer the dutch system.

counselling/support at host institution/organisation

The support at the University of Valladolid was fine. You always could go to the International Office and they helped you very well with resolving the problems. For the smaller problems, things with the courses for example, you had to talk with the teachers. The teachers are, as I already mencioned, really nice and relaxed, they really helped you to solve a problem.

transfer of credits

The transfer of credits was no problem, as both University of Valladolid and University of Utrecht use ECTS.

student life

welcome/orientation programme

Spain – Universidad de Valladolid

The International Office organized a "welcome day" for all the new foreign students during which they explained everything one more time; applying for courses, who to contact if there were problems etc etc. Furthermore ESN Valladolid, the Erasmus Organization of Valladolid, also organized welcome parties, a welcome day and a welcome weekend.

accommodation

When I applied at the University of Valladolid, they asked me if I wanted them to help me find accommodation or not. I said yes, and they gave three options concerning the accommodation: living with a Spanish family, living in a residence or living in a students flat. I choose the last one and a few days later I received an e-mail with various options of students flats specially for exchange students. From there on I had to arrange it myself, send an e-mail to the house owner etc. But the university helped a lot with giving me some options.

leisure/culture

The organization of ESN organized a lot, so there was enough to do when you weren't at the university. Every week there were various parties organized for the exchange students, sometimes there was a day trip to another city and once in a while there was a big trip to a place further away, for example the south of Spain or the islands.

There are also a lot of cities and villages close to Valladolid that are worth a visit, so if you prefer travel alone or with friends, and not with an organization like ESN, or you just want to do something on a free saturday and there is nothing organized by ESN, it's pretty easy to go on your own to see other places.

suggestions/tips

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conclusions

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

I would definitely recommend Valladolid and its university to the other students. It's a beautiful city, not too small, not too big and it has everything. The University is really well organized, the people are nice and they are always prepared to help you. First I decided to stay only 5 months, but after a month I wanted to stay the whole year, because it was so nice to live and study in Valladolid, so I decided to prolongue my stay abroad and in the end I stayed the whole year. This year was the best of my life, and as a friend of mine said: Erasmus isn't one year in your life, it's a life in one year. And I totally agree with him. Valladolid has become my second home and I really really recommend it to the other students.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

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