



Study Abroad Report Form

Text boxes will expand automatically while typing. Please use Tab to go to the next (text) box.

family name	
first name	
student number	
faculty/college	Geosciences
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's
name study programme	Human Geography and Spatial Planning

destination city & country	Baltimore, United States
name university abroad	Johns Hopkins University
start date	21 / 08 / 2019 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	21 / 12 / 2019 (dd/mm/yyyy)

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

PREPARATION	
exchange application process	<p>The application process can be a bit weird and confusing at times. After having applied through Utrecht University, you will have to apply through the portal of Johns Hopkins. This is the same portal all international students (so also full time students) use, and thus contains wrong information. For example, it asks you to show that you are able to pay full tuition/housing/travel expenses while living there, which is 80.000 dollars per year. This frightened me, as I would never be able to gather that much money. It turned out in the end that as an exchange student you <i>don't</i> need that much. It also asks for two recommendation letters, but I doubt they do much with these, so don't get too stressed about it. If you run into any trouble, do not hesitate to email the international office at Hopkins. They're very friendly and helpful and will do anything to help you get your stuff right. As there are very few exchange students at Hopkins, you will get to know the people at the international office there personally.</p>
counselling & support at Utrecht University	<p>Don't be afraid to ask for help and ask it in time</p>
academic preparation	<p>Some courses will have some pre-requisites, I didn't choose any of those.</p>
language preparation	<p>Speak English at an acceptable level and you'll be fine</p>
finances	<p>Hopkins is very expensive. Housing is mandatory in the near-campus accomodation building called "Nine-East 33rd" and costs about 5000 dollars for the semester. You also have to take mandatory health insurance at the university, which is a further 1100 dollars and you have to pay for your visa, which is a few hundred euros. Flying to the States is not as expensive as you might think, as long as you book well in advance. You can fly either into Baltimore directly or through Washington, Philadelphia or New York, all are pretty close and well connected by bus via greyhound.</p> <p>As for living expenses in Baltimore, you will find fruit and vegetables to be very expensive, often more than</p>



twice the price as in the Netherlands. Meat on the other hand is a lot cheaper, so if you eat a lot of meat that will even out a bit, if you're vegetarian, it's going to be expensive.

A major expense I didn't anticipate were the expenses of furnishing the apartment. When you arrive in August, the apartment will be completely bare, except for a couch and some chairs. This is not what is shown in the pictures on the website. This also applies to the room you'll live in. This means you'll have to buy pots, cutlery, stuff for cleaning, but also bedsheets, pillows etc. This also adds up to about another 100-150 dollars.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)

International Relations

academic quality of education activities

If you go to Hopkins I strongly suggest you take high level courses. These are taught personally by very prominent professors and you will learn so much more in these courses than in introductory courses. That being said, the overall academic quality at Hopkins is great. You can really learn more in one semester at Hopkins than your full bachelor in Human Geography in Utrecht, but only if you take the opportunity to do so and engage with the professors. It is also very easy to not participate and learn very little. You can decide for yourself how much you want to do, they'll give you pretty high grades anyway.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

Excellent. The international office really wants to help you with whatever you want. There are also a LOT of other resources you can use, from writing classes to groups to talk about social concerns to psychologists to lab projects. If you struggle with a class, it is completely normal to walk into the professors office and sit down with him/her to go through the material until you understand it fully. This can ofcourse also be used to engage more with the material if that's what you want. I don't think there are many places in the world with so many resources available per student, don't hesitate to use them.

transfer of credits

2 American credits = 1 EC

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

The first day of orientation was only for the exchange students, which is very nice, because you immediately get to know the other exchange students. As there are only +-30 exchange students at Hopkins, this will probably be where you'll find your friends, so getting to know them early is good. After this, the Hopkins orientation starts. This is called O'Week (for orientation) and its focused solely on freshman (first years) and a bit on transfer students. You will not be able to join everything, as some activities they do with/in their dorms (and you'll sleep in another building), but most activities you can just join. If somebody every asks you what you're doing, just say you're a freshman or that you're an exchange student, after which they'll not know what to do with you and just let you join.

Don't expect much drinking in the orientation (or throughout the whole exchange, more on that later), as all the freshmen are under 21 and 21 is the legal drinking age. There will be some parties at fraternities, but in my year none of the exchange students managed to get into any in O'week, so don't expect to.

accommodation

The accomodation in Nine East 33rd is amazing. There are study rooms, media rooms, a fireplace, a nice terrace with bbq, a gym, 24/7 reception/security. It is expensive, but as you don't have any choice you'll have to just live with it.



leisure & culture
<p>Try to join an association, there are so many. It's really nice to get to know some Americans as well as the other exchange students. Student culture at Hopkins mainly takes place within these associations (for activities) and fraternities (for partying). If you want to party, you can try to join a fraternity or befriend people in one. If you don't manage to do this, there will be very little partying for you.</p> <p>What's important to realize about Hopkins student culture is that it's very focused on getting good academic results. As it's a top university, without having the name of any of the big Ivy-leagues, the people at Hopkins are very driven and really want to get straight A's to be able to get into their favourite Masters (or grad-school as they call it). The exchange students from other universities mostly share these feelings, with most of them being selected from the top of their universities to come here. Don't be surprised if on a Saturday night everybody will be studying until 12, only to wake up early again the next day to start studying again at 8. It is important you can find a few people who also want to have fun while you're there, because it is really possible (and even likely if you don't actively try to avoid it) that you'll end your semester having done nothing but study very hard. Having seen some people who have done this, almost all of them regret not going with us to parties, outings, sports events etc. It is all there and you can do whatever you want, but it doesn't always come as easy as I suppose it does in other exchange programs, here you really have to take initiative and make social outings happen yourself, because most of the people just want to study all the time.</p>
suggestions/tips
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. see previous 2. really join an association 3. if you really want to party a lot during your exchange, don't go to Hopkins, it is not the right place for you. If you want to study really hard and learn a lot and do some leisure activities on the side, this university might be more for you.

CONCLUSIONS
would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain
<p>It is a privilege to study at Hopkins and if you go there you should see it as such. You don't have to pay tuition while all your classmates are paying 60.000 per year to follow the same classes. If you want to learn a lot from extremely knowledgeable professors and get to know them personally, while not minding the absence of parties that much, this might be the place for you.</p>
do you have any additional advice or comments?
<p>I truly look back at my time at Hopkins with a lot of joy. I met a lot of people with who I will remain friends for a very long time and we're planning to meet up again soon. The academic quality at Hopkins was really high and I learned so much from professors who I really admire and I cannot feel different than being honoured to have been able to get to know all of them personally. That being said, I do realize this destination is not for everyone, but if you like working hard, learning a lot and are able to grab opportunities, this is one you really can't miss. Hopkins really is an amazing experience.</p>
Can students contact you for additional info and do you give us permission to put this in the student reports on our website? If yes, please write down how they can get in touch with you (e-mail, Facebook, Instagram etc)
<p>Yes! If you're contemplating going to Hopkins or the US in general or have questions about anything, send me an email at m.p.k.ahsmann@students.uu.nl or find me on facebook: Thijs Ahsmann.</p>

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