



UU Study Abroad Report Form

	Contact info at the IO.
faculty/college	Geosciences
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's
name study programme	Global Sustainability Science

destination city & country	Cape Town, South Africa
name university abroad	University of the Western Cape
start date	02 / 02 / 2023 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	26 / 06 / 2023 (dd/mm/yyyy)

PREPARATION	
exchange application process	The application is the same for every student applying for UWC. So, you just follow the general application process and only fill in the questions marked with a star. There are many questions that are not really applicable to your application. The application process might be confusing because many statements are South African English or things you have never heard of before, but you can find everything on google. Even if you make a mistake this will be corrected by the contact person at UWC. So, don't worry! After completing the application, always e-mail your contact person to make sure everything is all right. Getting the visa is more difficult and will take some time. Prepare and start the visa application process a few months before you want to receive it!
counselling & support at Utrecht University	You could always ask every question, but most things were unknown as the exchange coordinator was new.
academic preparation	You don't have to prepare for the academic level. The academic level at UWC is the same or a bit easier than at UU.
language preparation	There are many spoken languages in South Africa, however, everyone can speak English there. So, if you're English is well, you will be fine!
finances	I worked a lot before going on this exchange, because I wanted to be able to do everything I would love to. Cape Town is as expensive as Utrecht in regards to rent and groceries. Eating out is much cheaper than in The Netherlands. Overall, I spent more money than I would have in Utrecht, but I also did a lot of (touristic) activities and went on weekends away and holidays. The basic expenditures are the same or a bit less than in Utrecht.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD	
study programme (content and organisational issues)	I followed the course 'Political Thought in Africa' which I really recommend if you want to learn more about decolonization, Pan-Africanism, and how the situation in Africa now came to be. I even want to say that it is



almost a must to follow this course, as you really understand your surroundings then. My other courses were 'Cultures of Capitalism' and 'Coastal Environments' which were pretty good as well.
academic quality of education activities
The academic level was surprisingly high. It is not more difficult, but you have to do a lot to pass the course. I had to write many essays and exams, and needed to attend many tutorials. The only thing I did not like is that I had no group work at all. Maybe other courses incorporate group work, but those I followed didn't. I also didn't have to go to school often. I only had a few lectures in the week and I was also a day off. This was pretty nice, as I had more free time to do fun stuff in Cape Town.
counselling & support at receiving university abroad
Debra welcomed us with a warm heart. She is so lovely and helped us with everything (I think she will not be there anymore). I can even say that everyone would help you. Every person is so friendly and welcoming. There is an international office you can go to any time you want and they will help you out (also when there is loadshedding and you really need internet).
transfer of credits
I haven't received my grades yet, so I would not know if the transfer of credits is easy.

STUDENT LIFE	
welcome & orientation programme	In the first week, we had an orientation week and we got to know the other international exchange students and the campus. I immediately felt at home. There are not many exchange students, which I really liked. You will still make friends with some of them, but you will also make a lot of South African friends 😊 In the first week already, people will come up to you and have a chat!
accommodation	DON'T STAY ON CAMPUS!!!!!!!!!! I really really want to highlight this! The campus of UWC is in the Cape Flats and the neighbourhood is not that safe (the campus is safe though). Moreover, the campus is a half an hour drive to the city centre of Cape Town, but there are many traffic jams so most of the time it takes you more minutes. I really recommend to stay in Observatory as there are many students there and it is pretty safe. I found my room at Heron Square which I also recommend as this organisation does not ask too much money for rent. Moreover, most roomies will be South Africans which will help with getting more South African friends!!! You really get to know their culture and doing then.
leisure & culture	There is so much to do in Cape Town. Mostly outside activities, but you will have a lot of good weather. Staying in Observatory is perfect for this as the activities are nearby then. You can surf in Muizenberg or Blouberg, go to museums in the city, hike the Table Mountain, scuba dive in the kelp forest, etc. I was never bored. I also really liked that you could get to know South Africans as they are very open and welcome. You won't be in an "international bubble" as I would call it (meaning that you only mix with and do things with internationals). So, if you're interested in the (black) culture and local people, going to UWC is really recommended.
suggestions/tips	Rent a car at Motorent (other car rental companies are much more expensive). I did this with the other person who went to UWC from the UU, so we could split the costs. Fuel is not so expensive in South Africa and because we had to drive to school almost every week day, Uber would be more expensive. Moreover, because of safety reasons, having a car makes life more easier and gives you more freedom (you can drive in the night alone, but getting an Uber or walking alone is really not that safe). If you stay in Observatory, you also skip the



traffic jams when driving to and from school (in the morning you get out of the city and there is a huge traffic jam getting into the city and in the afternoon it is the other way around).

CONCLUSIONS

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

Yes yes and yes!!!! I was really interested in the topics of decolonization, black culture, Pan-Africanism and I experienced and learned all of it (and more). UWC is really authentic, in my opinion, and really opens up your mind and make you see other parts/things of the world. Everyone is friendly and approachable and you will make many long-lasting friends! Moreover, Cape Town is awesome, you have the city life but also nature (mountains, nature parks, ocean, etc.). You can't get bored. However, everyone told me that Cape Town is not "South Africa", so I also recommend to go outside of the Western Cape if you really want to experience and explore more of South Africa.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

If you're doubting about your safety: yes bad things can happen and it is definitely not as safe as Utrecht, but if you know this, take it into account and watch out, the chances are small that something will happen (nothing happened to me and nothing got stolen). You will get used to it. There are also safer areas and the more risky/dangerous areas, so don't go to the more dangerous areas. There are still enough areas you can go to! It is also safe for girls (I am a girl!), but as a boy you can do, unfortunately, more... An example: I wanted to hike with another girl (so the two of us) in the Silvermine park, however, people recommended us not to go in the afternoon anymore if there was no boy with us or we needed a bigger group of girls 😞 (in the end, we still went and nothing happened, but I do not recommend this ofc). But after all, I had the best time of my life and I would not choose to do it differently or another destination. I am already looking into the possibility to go back!!!!



UU Study Abroad Report Form

faculty/college	Geowetenschappen
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's
name study programme	Milieu-Natuurwetenschappen

destination city & country	Cape Town, South Africa
name university abroad	University of the Western Cape
start date	18 / 08 / 2018 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	16 / 12 / 2018 (dd/mm/yyyy)

PREPARATION	
exchange application process	The application process at Utrecht University was relatively easy. It is important to note that you need to decide on time where and when you want to go on exchange since the application for the September semester is already in December of the prior year. Another thing to pay attention to is that student OV compensation is only paid for by the government if you apply on time (NIET met terugwerkende kracht!). Furthermore, the visa application for South Africa is very extensive so as soon as you find out you are chosen, start the visa application procedure. Make sure all the documents are filled out with black pen and make copies since they might get lost.
counselling & support at Utrecht University	Utrecht University support was very limited. Questions regarding the visa were often unanswered and I had to find out independently what to do. The best is to get in contact with someone who went on exchange to South Africa already which is more helpful. Also, Utrecht University informed me that student OV would be compensated even if applied for late, this is not the case (GEEN terugwerkende kracht!)
academic preparation	None required. At the University of the Western Cape, I was allowed to follow any courses I wished without the necessary requirements.
language preparation	Fluent English is a must.
finances	South Africa is comparable to The Netherlands when it comes to housing and basic groceries. If possible, put some money aside so you can rent a car which makes life a lot easier. A car can be rented at Motorent for around 250 euro (R3200) excluding gas.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD	
study programme (content and organisational issues)	The programme was amazing and well organised. I do recommend to spend some time prior to the beginning of classes to find the venues where classes will commend. If you are unable to find the right venue, ask around, people are very helpful.
academic quality of education activities	The quality was comparable to Utrecht University. The only aspect of my courses which was lacking was the environmental part of the South African Politics and the Environment course. It was clear that the knowledge



and understanding of the students was of lower quality than in Utrecht.
counselling & support at receiving university abroad
Debra was amazing and is willing to help with anything and everything!
transfer of credits
Not yet done.

STUDENT LIFE
welcome & orientation programme
The welcome was brief. I highly appreciate the attention that was paid to safety since this is an issue in South Africa.
accommodation
I found my room via my housemate who directed me to Xchange South Africa run by Karin Comer. Usually she organizes exchanges but she is willing to provide housing for students as well. I paid 150 euro for her service. If you choose to stay with Karin, I would suggest to stay in the Sawkins house, otherwise Malleson and lastly Strubens as there is a big quality difference. My housemates were internationals from Europe and some Dutch people.
leisure & culture
The South African culture is all about friendliness and patience. When greeting someone it is very normal to ask them how they are before continuing the conversation. In the supermarket you will notice that people are not in a rush, but don't worry, you'll learn to love this. Safety is an issue in South Africa and I would highly recommend not to go out on the streets alone at night. There are also certain areas around town where you do not want to end up so make sure you ask your landlord and housemates what is possible and what not. However, do not be afraid, if you keep this in the back of your head, you will be more than fine.
suggestions/tips
Make sure you have a credit card!

CONCLUSIONS
Definitely, the University of the Western Cape is a very political university and this has led me to have very interesting discussions with some classmates. In South Africa you can still clearly notice the segregation of white, black and coloured people. Although I do not like making this distinction, you will notice that at the University of the Western Cape, you are one of the only white people. It is therefore an excellent opportunity to integrate and to experience the culture differences and to hear the other side of the story.
do you have any additional advice or comments?
Follow courses in politics! The course Political Thought: Thinking about race was very interesting. It looked at racism from a philosophical point of view and it is intriguing to follow this course in a country where racism is visible in everyday life. Also, the course South African Politics and the Environment was very interesting. Despite the environmental aspect which was lacking, you get an overview of the history of Apartheid which I find is something you cannot miss out on if you visit South Africa.



UU Study Abroad Report Form

faculty/college	REBO
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's
name study programme	Rechtsgeleerdheid
destination city & country	Cape Town , South Africa
name university abroad	University of Western Cape
start date	16 / 07 / 2018 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	15 / 07 / 2018 (dd/mm/yyyy)

PREPARATION	
exchange application process	<p>The application process went quite smoothly. You have to fill in a few forms online and then you have to wait until the university sends the official document with the dates, administration fee and additional information. This is the document you need for the application of your visa. They are quite late with sending this, so you don't have a lot of time to apply for your visa. Make sure you have all the correct documents for your visa application before going to the embassy, because a lot of people get send back.</p>
counselling & support at Utrecht University	<p>I had asked a few questions via email and got a response quickly. They are willing to help and it is easy to make an appointment as well. Although they are willing to help, they don't know everything. There were a few instances in which they couldn't help.</p>
academic preparation	<p>I hadn't done any academic preparation. The academic level is much lower compared to the UU, but this also varies per course.</p>
language preparation	<p>I hadn't done any language prepaation. maybe if you're struggling with English a lot you could train it before coming to South-Africa, but you will mosy likely manage without any preparation.</p>
Finances	<p>South Africa is a little bit cheaper than the Netherlands. For example, you can eat a full meal at a restaurant for around 10 Euros. Public transport is very cheap as well. Sometimes it depends on what you want to do/buy, because the prices can be the same as in the Netherlands or sometimes even more expensive. But overall life is a bit cheaper. Also for many activities, like hiking table mountain and the beach etc. you don't need to pay anything.</p>

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD	
study programme (content and organisational issues)	<p>I didn't encounter any organisational issues. It was a bit of a puzzle to choose courses that didn't clash, but that was sorted out fairly quickly. I chose courses from different faculties and there were no problems regarding the schedual etc.</p>
academic quality of education activities	



The academic level is much lower compared to the UU, I would guess the level is more similar to HBO. But the quality of education also depends a lot on the courses you take. It is nice though that you have more free time to explore the city on the weekends.
counselling & support at receiving university abroad
They have an international office on the campus where you go to to meet the other international students with the introduction. They are all very welcoming and nice and they try their hardest to help with your courses or other problems.
transfer of credits
Thus far my credits haven't been transferred yet, so I can't tell you anything about it. It took a while for UWC to send the grades.

STUDENT LIFE	
welcome & orientation programme	We had a welcome and orientation programme of two days where you have the opportunity to meet the other international students that are new. You get a lot of information about where to find people and places and information. A tour of the campus is given which is very nice, so you know a little bit where your course buildings are before the classes start.
accommodation	You have the option to get a room at the campus, but no one did that because the university is quite far from the city. And in the weekends the busses don't go very often. Every one of the international students stayed in Observatory. There are multiple companies from which you can rent a room. I rented mine from rent-a-room. They were a nice company to rent from, if something broke they fixed it very quickly. The rooms are a little bit cheaper than the prices of rooms in Utrecht, but still around 350 Euros a month depending on size of the room you get.
leisure & culture	There's a lot to do in and around Cape Town. There's of course the table mountain and lionshead for beautiful hikes, you can learn to surf in Muizenberg and go shopping at the V&A Waterfront. there are multiple musea to visit as well als many bars, restraunts and clubs. There is enough to do in Cape Town, so you won't get bored.
suggestions/tips	Definitely do a sunrise hike on lionshead, it's amazing!

CONCLUSIONS	
would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain	I would definitely recommend going to Cape Town, it's a beautiful city. I would only recommend UWC if you want to have enough time to explore the city, because I wouldn't go to UWC for their academic level. Although I learned a lot from going to Cape Town, it's more the experiences with the people and differences in culture than what I learned at school. Besides that it's a good university, the campus is nice as well as the people.
do you have any additional advice or comments?	-



UU Study Abroad Report Form

faculty/college	Social sciences
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's
name study programme	Psychology

destination city & country	Cape Town, South Africa
name university abroad	University of the Western Cape
start date	17/07 /2018 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	14 /12 /2018 (dd/mm/yyyy)

PREPARATION

exchange application process

I had a really hard time with my application process. For South Africa you are required to have a study visa. However applying for a study visa is not easy. You need to hand in several documents and with the information you received from the embassy it is not clear what documents they exactly want. In the end it took me four times to go up and down to The Hague to sort out my visa, it was really stressful, they are really unfriendly and I recommend to start as soon as you know that you are going to Cape Town.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

The information I got from Utrecht University was really little. I was quite unprepared when I got there and had just little information about the University of the Western Cape. The most information I got was from a girl who studied there the year before. Despite the lack of information at Utrecht University the staff is really helpful to help you solve your problems.

academic preparation

Finding courses of your interest and academic level. However when you are subscribing at the University of the Western Cape many courses appear to be not available.

language preparation

None

Finances

I raised my Duo loan(study finance), to be able to do a lot of activities of my interest in Cape Town. The rent for accommodation will be comparable with rent in Utrecht or even a little cheaper. However the life is cheaper in Cape Town. You can go out for food and have an amazing meal for about 8 euros.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)

Several times I was disappointed in the educational programme at the University of the Western Cape. The as for example travelling one hour to university to find out through a letter on the door that your class is cancelled.

academic quality of education activities

Differs a lot within the courses!!! So choose carefully of what you are looking for. It is totally not similar to our university. Lectures were mainly (depending on the course) superficial and without depth. However I did an English course which was fun, we had a lot of excursions to the theatre. A thing you will never experience at



Utrecht University.
counselling & support at receiving university abroad
The support was amazing, Debra (exchange manager) showed me all around campus, you could always walk into her office for a little chat or help. And never met anyone who replied to e-mail as quickly as she did.
transfer of credits
Smoothly, I received the required papers in January (a month after my exchange).

STUDENT LIFE
welcome & orientation programme
Due to problems with arranging my visa, I was too late to attend the orientation programme. Later on the university organized a day-tour in a township for the exchange students. However the rest of the semester there were no activities for the exchange students.
Accommodation
Arranged by yourself! Don't go living at campus as it is far from town and not as fun as living in neighbourhoods like Observatory or Mowbray. I lived in Observatory and loved it, met so many nice people up there. However it was an hour travelling to university and the busses were only leaving once an hour. Taking the mini-busses was another option to travel to university, but they were quite unsafe as they were for example drinking behind the wheel or stopping in the middle of the highway.
leisure & culture
Amazing!!!!!!! Cape Town is amazing, climb mountains on the weekend, watch the sunset at the beach, drink wines, amazing bars, a lot of music, cool parties and way way way more. In observatory live many other internationals, which is so much fun! However there is also a huge poor side of Cape Town which seemed to be ignored by the richer side of Cape Town.
suggestions/tips
Rent a car to get around Cape Town. Be aware of the high crime in Cape Town, my phone got stolen and I think 1/3 of the internationals had a weird experience with violence or robbery!

CONCLUSIONS
would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain
Yes, but only if you are looking for a different cultural experience. Cape Town might be really western but the university is totally different from Dutch universities. I definitely don't regret studying at the University of the Western Cape but I think I underestimated it beforehand. Again be aware of the high crime in Cape Town, at the same time Cape Town is such a diverse city with so many amazing activities, you will have a lovely time.
do you have any additional advice or comments?
Be aware of the fact that Apartheid is still really apparent, especially when you are studying you see a lot of disparity within the population.



UU Study Abroad Report Form

Family name:	xxx
First name:	xxx
Student number:	xxx
Faculty/college:	Science
Level:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor <input type="checkbox"/> master <input type="checkbox"/> PhD <input type="checkbox"/> other
Name degree programme:	Information Science

Destination city & country	Cape Town, South Africa
Name host institution and/or company/organisation	University of the Western Cape
Purpose of exchange	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> study/courses <input type="checkbox"/> work placement <input type="checkbox"/> field work <input type="checkbox"/> other
Departure date (dd/mm/yyyy)	29-07-2017
Return date (dd/mm/yyyy)	14-12-2017

Preparation

Exchange/placement application process:

I'm writing this in May 2018, so it has been a while since I applied. Everything you have to do for Utrecht University is quite simple compared to the visa procedure. UWC's application was also not that difficult, mainly just confusing (their system is not great).

The visa procedure though, that is quite a bit of work. Start early! You need to go to the embassy first to pick up a checklist (that is also on their website) and some other forms. The checklist has a million and one confusing instructions. For example, you have to go to your doctor and have him/her sign a form and get an x-ray in the hospital. You need to have proof of insurance (Momentum Health!) and need a flight + return ticket that is within 2 days of the start and end of UWC's semester. That means not getting to South Africa early and not leaving late. And then there are a few other things like VOG (police clearance), UWC's acceptance letter and proof of accommodation

Counselling/support at home university:

If you have questions, email Sahra or visit during open hours. Not much support needed.

Academic preparation:

None, nothing you can really do to prepare. Not needed either.

Language preparation:



None needed
Finances:
Accommodation is around 300-400 euros at RentARoom, food is not that expensive, renting a car is like €10-15 a day. Flight is €1000 Make sure you have enough money to travel. There is some free time and South Africa is beautiful. I think I spend around €5000 and made no attempt to save money, so spending less would be easy.
Study/placement abroad period
Study programme/work plan (concerning content and organisational issues):
I followed 5 courses, dropped one in the second week because I did not like it. This meant I was never able to get 30 ECTS but I did not mind. I ended up not being happy with more courses (don't follow IEB134) but continued them anyway.
I recommend following Afrikaans, I did not but others did and they enjoyed it. It is extremely easy and the lecturer loves you.
Academic quality of education/placement activities:
UWC is not a terrible university, but it is definitely not of similar quality to Utrecht. It can be a hit and miss per course. Overall, the level is just lower for many courses. However sometimes they compensate this by you needing to know everything by heart. Which can be a bit annoying.
I followed one Law course (ILS121) where they decided that half the course would be basic math. That meant an extra free hour for me per week, because I did not need to learn how to round numbers.
Counselling/support at host institution/organisation:
Debra from the International Office is lovely, but chaotic and busy. An email will not always suffice. She sometimes forgets about the promises she makes and you will have to remind her several times.
Transfer of credits:
I have been home for 6 months now and have not received my credits. This is because I had to re-take two exams (travelled a bit too much, studied a bit too little), I wrote these exams in January and then from February to the beginning of May I had to send numerous emails to try and get my results from the international office. Apparently, they forget to check one of my exams and had I not pushed to get the result I would have missed out on credits. I hope to get my credits within 2 weeks now. So not UU's fault, but UWC's fault.
Student life
Welcome/orientation programme:
You get the whole spiel about the university, its history (which is very interesting and unique), HIV/AIDS, homesickness and a tour of the campus. You meet some new people (who you find out all live in the same area) and you quickly make new friends.
Accommodation:
Observatory. That is all you need to know. Get a room in Observatory. That is where all the internationals are. Yes it is pretty far from the university, no it does not matter. Go to Observatory. You can either go through 4exchange (Dutch organisation) or RentARoom (SA organisation). 4exchange gets their rooms at RentARoom but they also offer a simcard/welcome package/events,



<p>ultimately it's not worth €200 euros but it does give you a Dutch contact in SA. If you go with RentARoom, I would recommend getting a room near Station Road/Lower Main Road.</p>
<p>Leisure/culture:</p>
<p>Let's start with the elephant in the room: safety. Nothing serious happened when I was there, to me at least. You need to be careful, especially when it is dark. But it is not an unsafe country, I never felt I was in danger. Just make sure to not walk home alone at night (especially for girls) and if you feel unsafe, act on it. Make sure others don't walk home alone either. Please don't ever be afraid to ask someone to walk you somewhere, even if it is close.</p> <p>If you are someone that gets scared easily and might feel unsafe easily, it might not be the country for you. You will get approached by many homeless people asking for stuff and you need to be able to deal with that. We had one student not finishing the full study abroad because she was never comfortable in South Africa. She never felt safe (even when there was no reason to). That together with homesickness can be quite difficult to handle.</p> <p>Ultimately, South Africa is amazing and its culture is too. If you use your brain when doing stuff then you can have an amazing time without ever feeling unsafe. It is a beautiful country, you can go on gorgeous hikes. You will meet people from all over the world (although most of them will be Dutch unfortunately, or German).</p>
<p>Suggestions/tips:</p>
<p>If you stay in Observatory (which you should!), definitely go eat at the Ethiopian place, Ferdinando's pizza, Jerry's, Obz Café) Get a drink at Forex (Tuesday pubquiz, Thursday beerpong) and Stones.</p> <p>Go to Mzoli's Place if you enjoy eating meat with your hands, drinking and having a good time. It's a restaurant in the township so take an Uber.</p> <p>Visit Namibia if you have the time and money. We rented a rooftop tent 4x4 in Cape Town and drove there, then moved around in Namibia for 8 days (longer is recommended, if possible).</p>
<p>Conclusions</p>
<p>Would you recommend this host organisation/destination to others? Please explain:</p>
<p>Heck yes. I had the best time of my life, you will too. Just don't go for the university, go for the place. Also, if you're contemplating between Stellenbosch and UWC, think about this: do you want to stay in Cape Town, do you want to study at a university which is truly South African? Then UWC. Do you not care about Cape Town and just want a safe and good South African university? Stellenbosch might be it for you.</p>
<p>Do you have any additional advice or comments?:</p>
<p>Just do it. Questions, feel free to contact me. *The contact info of this student is available at the IO.* I was so happy with my choice I'm already looking at study abroad locations for my masters.</p>



UU Study Abroad Report Form

Faculty/college:	Faculty of Social Sciences
Level:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor <input type="checkbox"/> master <input type="checkbox"/> PhD <input type="checkbox"/> other
Name degree programme:	Psychology

Destination city & country	Cape Town, South Africa
Name host institution and/or company/organisation	University of the Western Cape
Purpose of exchange	<input type="checkbox"/> study/courses <input type="checkbox"/> work placement <input type="checkbox"/> field work <input type="checkbox"/> other
Departure date (dd/mm/yyyy)	16-07-2016
Return date (dd/mm/yyyy)	30-01-2017 (but university was finished two months before)

Preparation

Exchange/placement application process:

When I applied, it was my second time because I had already tried the year before. At that time I had underestimated the competition and didn't get in – so this time I made more effort (e.g. by asking people for feedback on my motivation letter). Things in the Netherlands are organized quite well though So this process went smoothly. Of course, there is a time of waiting but then I remember it was so exciting to get the news that I was accepted.

Counselling/support at home university:

I have gone to the international office quite a few times with questions. At that time, the office was in transition, they had switched coordinators so the current coordinator was not certain about everything (the fact that communication with UWC sometimes took a long time added to this). It worked out though, but you need to plan your visits because the coordinator has limited visiting hours.

Academic preparation:

I did not need to prepare anything in particular

Language preparation:

My classes at UWC were in English, so I didn't need to prepare for that either. It was a nice preparation that I had an English course at UU some months before I started at UWC (before I had only had literature in English, not whole courses) but I can't say it's really necessary. But that also depends on how certain you are about your own level of English.

Finances:

Well, as a student I am and was always broke I did try to save a bit more before I left, but most of the financing was done by an increase of my student loan. You may think it's easy to finance, but you really shouldn't



underestimate – it is not just living costs, but you will be doing a lot more ‘fun stuff’, eating out etc. which is going to cost you a lot of money. Let alone the amounts that you have to pay for all the bureaucratic stuff (like your visa). It’s a lot, but it’s so worth it!

Study/placement abroad period

Study programme/work plan (concerning content and organisational issues):

Most of the course matters were organized in the introduction week at UWC. We did have the opportunity to look at the lists of courses they offered beforehand, but the lists are not always up to date, some classes may be full and in general things are organized differently which can lead you to misunderstand the system (or things just aren’t organized very much at all ☐). So don’t worry about it too much when you’re still in the Netherlands, you can’t do much about it from this side anyway. Things will find their way when you’re there, I also found that many other internationals were less prepared than me. In the introduction week, I got to choose the courses that I was interested in and then Debra (the coordinator from UWC) tried as much as possible to fit my favourites into a schedule. In the end, I had five courses (all semester courses, they don’t work with quarter years at UWC), and I really enjoyed each of them! I had only 1 psychology course because I didn’t need something particular and I was interested in a broad range of topics, especially concerning South Africa(n culture). So I also had courses in history, anthropology, Xhosa and communication.

Academic quality of education/placement activities:

In a way, it’s hard to compare because it is just organized so differently. The education feels more like Dutch HBO education, in the sense that there are many more contact hours and practical assignments. Although I like the university format more, in this case I enjoyed it as well because it made me more involved with the things that I was learning and with uni life. The quality of the courses differed extremely, it really depends on the teachers that you have. I guess you just have to be lucky or if you’re really motivated, ask the local students about the teachers of the courses you’re considering. In general, however, I found that the higher-level courses (e.g. third-year courses instead of first-year) have better quality. Of course, they are also a bit more difficult but it’s really no big deal: the history course that I followed was also a third-year course and even though I had never done a history course before, I passed easily. So you can be a little cocky in your estimation up front. ☐

Counselling/support at host institution/organisation:

Debra was our coordinator, and she was really sweet and helpful. She presented herself as ‘our mother for the semester’, so that speaks for itself haha. If you had a question or problem you could always come to her office and she would almost always be there. If not, she had very nice colleagues who could also help you.

Transfer of credits:

Still in the process, but it seems like it will work itself out fine. It takes some time though, especially since the South African summer holidays started right after the exams in November/December, so they only pick it up in Feb.

Student life

Welcome/orientation programme:

An introduction week was organized by the international office. The week in itself was really nice, but the communication about it beforehand was very unclear. It made me go to uni one day before for nothing, which I didn’t really mind, but it could be better organized. In the end, we had 2-3



days (depending on how everything went with registering for classes) with a group of about 40 internationals. I'm really glad I was there because it was a great time to get in contact with like-minded people to start getting together for the fun stuff as well. The introduction itself consisted of a tour, some explanations, some speeches from people like the headmaster, and about topics like HIV/AIDS and culture shock etc.

Accommodation:

From other students' experiences, I had read that Observatory was a nice area to live in (although not very close to uni). I had already chosen not to live on campus because it was quite far from the city life, and I'm glad I did. Only 1 of all internationals lived on campus, and she didn't have a great time because of multiple reasons, but also because the city life was so far and all internationals were living there. Anyway, I have tried to look for cheap rooms by finding locals who could tell me where to find those places, however, I failed – it is really difficult to do such a thing from long-distance, especially since you never really know what you're getting into. So in the end I gave in and rented a room at a Rent-A-Room house in Observatory. I can't say I would really recommend it though. It is really overpriced (of course, they serve innocent internationals ☹) and you only live with internationals, whereas I would've really enjoyed living with locals. My stay there was totally fine in the end, also because I had a friend living in the same house, but it wasn't the greatest house, I can't say it really made me feel at home. We actually considered looking for another place (also because my friend had a small room without a window) but in the end it wasn't really worth the effort anymore. It was a safe place though, so I would say: if you want to go for the safe option, just go for a rent-a-room house, but if you wanna go cheap and don't mind a little more uncertainty, look a little further (for example the facebook page OBS-SESSED has regular offers).

Observatory, however, is the best area I've ever lived in! I've really fallen in love with it. People there are so open, there are many internationals but also locals, many musicians and other kinds of creative minds, and once you get some contacts in the local bar, your network will expand super quickly and you will always run into people that you know on the street. They have some great bars with very often live music/open mic and also some good restaurants/cafes where you can go to study. Some people said to me beforehand that Obs wasn't very safe, but I have not experienced that: although safety must be kept in mind everywhere you go in SA (e.g. don't go walking out in the dark on your own), this is a great place where many different cultures can meet (unlike the more homogenous white areas in the city centre)

Leisure/culture:

Like I said before: you're gonna spend a lot of money on this. Happily ☹. There is so much to do and so many beautiful things to see, you won't get enough. Really, don't hold back because you will regret it. Some of my favourite things were hiking the mountains, driving to other beautiful places (or make little camping trips) like the indian ocean in Muizenberg, or having drinks in Obs or in town. Many would say that town is famous for its night life, I guess it is but I didn't enjoy it that much. I usually preferred to stay in Obs because there's less tourists and more locals and long-term internationals.

Suggestions/tips:

Rent a car! It is not simple to get around, public transport is arranged badly so you can't really rely on that (during the day it would be safe to take the minibus but that's about it and it takes a lot of time). Uber works very well but it's really expensive if you always have to take an Uber. Of course, renting a car is also not cheap but it's doable (especially compared to European prices) and gas is cheap as well. It gives you so much more independence. And especially when you live far from campus this is a must. However, it is not 100% necessary, since there are probably going to be



other internationals that you can carpool with. But if you can: rent a car together with 1 or 2 friends and everything will be much easier. If you are planning on staying longer than say 4/5/6 months, it may even be worth it considering to buy a car and sell it in the end.

Conclusions

Would you recommend this host organisation/destination to others? Please explain:

Yes! This exchange has really given me so many amazing experiences, broadening my vision and understanding, particularly cross-culturally (which was one of my main reasons to go). The education was generally very interesting and it was great to get to know some local students and a quite different student life from the UU life. Going for the semester gives you the opportunity to dive into the daily life (although of course still limited compared to people who live there permanently) and get to know the country, culture, people, etc. And the nature is a reason in itself to go on this trip as well! Another upside to this exchange is that you will be finished with the semester end of November/beginning of December so you will have plenty of time to extend your stay with travels/voluntary work/whatever before continuing your next semester in Feb.

Do you have any additional advice or comments?:

Trust me: the bureaucracy of the application and preparation in the beginning may make you want to give up on it, but in the end you will be so extremely happy that you didn't because this is a unique experience of building up a kind of second (or maybe 3rd/4th?) home together with people from all kinds of countries and most importantly with South Africans ☐. They are such amazing people. To me this was even more interesting because SA obviously also has the tragic history of Apartheid. I have learned (both in class and outside of class) a lot about this history and how it still affects today's society, and got to talk to many different sorts of South Africans about it. If this interests you, you're gonna have an amazing time and learn so much. This is one of the things that has really changed me personally as well. Oh, and something that relates to this: during my semester at UWC there were also strikes concerning education fees (look up #feesmustfall and you will find the background story). Of course, this has affected my education a little (2 weeks of classes canceled and exams were postponed a little and held at different venues), but I didn't feel personally affected that much. If anything, I felt involved with a part of South African history unfolding (e.g. I was part of some peaceful protests) and mostly felt sorry for local students whose educational future was and still is uncertain. If these things worry you, I would say: of course they can't say anything indefinitely about it, but in previous years to my knowledge it hasn't caused any international student to fail a class that they would've otherwise passed (lecturers get very flexible and helpful to make sure students don't become the victims of the protests). It changes things and may make it more (bureaucratically) difficult, but for me it was also part of the very real experience.