

2022-2023

Report 1

permission to publish contact details**	<i>optional; only if you allow students preparing for study abroad to contact you (directly)</i>
	my e-mail address <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: m.j.antal@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	history

destination city & country	Turku, Finland
how did you travel to your destination?	plane
name university abroad	University of Turku
start date	21 / 08 / 2022 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	18 / 12 / 2023 (dd/mm/yyyy)

PREPARATION	
exchange application process	The application process took a lot of time and required lots of paperwork, but the documents provided by the international office and informative e-mails gave a clear overview of all the steps that needed to be taken and where certain information/documents could be found. Therefore the application process was very doable.
counselling & support at Utrecht University	Whenever I had questions I send e-mails to the international office or erasmus. It always took a couple of days to receive an answer, but it was very helpful.
academic preparation	I didn't do any academic preparation.
language preparation	Language preparation was not necessary since I could take all of the courses in English.
finances	I had been saving money for a couple of years and applied for the Erasmus grant. The whole semester cost me around 5000 euros.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD	
study programme (content and organisational issues)	I had to take five courses at the same time since there was not a clear division between the two periods in the humanities faculty. I took one Finnish language course and the other four courses focussed on Finnish history and culture. However these courses had quite similar contents and for humanities and social sciences students there were not a lot of options. The amount of credits I received for my courses were quite confusing. At Utrecht this makes more sense since you always receive 7,5 ECTS. At Turku most courses were worth 5 ECTS,

but I also took one for 10 and one for 4, and there were even courses for only 1 or 2 ECTS. So this is something you have to take into consideration. There was also no system for planning courses (like the ABCDE one at Utrecht), you just had to check the times different classes would be taking place and try to fit everything into your schedule.

academic quality of education activities

The academic quality was good and my courses were interesting, but I would say the education level was lower than what I am used to at Utrecht University. Most courses in the humanities faculty consist of only lectures and no seminar groups or no classes at all and only reading books and then taking a test or writing a paper. There was also less self study; instead of having to read lots of articles and a handbook I usually only had to write a short text about the lectures. The course assessment was usually done by grading these weekly learning diaries. I only had to write one paper and took one exam during the whole semester. However, I noticed this was very different at other faculties. It was very easy to get high grades; with minimal effort I only received 5s and one 4 (roughly equivalent to 10 and 9 in the Netherlands).

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

The communication with the University of Turku was amazing. They send lots of e-mails with clear information on what we had to arrange during our exchange semester. Whenever I send them e-mails they would reply very fast, sometimes already on the same day, and they were quick with sending the necessary documents before, during and after the exchange. We also had a student tutor and mine was really helpful with answering questions and for instance picking up my apartment keys before arrival, but not all tutors were this helpful.

transfer of credits

My credits have not been transferred yet, but I received my transcript of records quite quickly.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

The University of Turku had an orientation programme in which they gave the exchange students all the information we might possibly need. As it was three days of presentations I almost felt like it was too extensive. ESN Turku had lots of fun activities planned during the orientation week, which made it very easy too meet lots of people and get to know the campus and city.

accommodation

For me it was easy to find accomodation since I was lucky enough to be placed in the student dorms of TYS in student village east. These appartments were amazing; they were cheap (325 p/m) and only a ten minute walk to the university and ten minute bike ride to the city centre (or thirty minute walk). My room was very big and had its own fridge and there was a nice common space (kitchen, living room, 1,5 bath) I shared with two other amazing international students. There was also a laundry room and sauna in the building that you could book via the TYS app. The only downsides were that the appartment was a little bit outdated/dirty and it was completely empty; no pans, plates, cutlery, blankets, curtains, etc. However, the university provides a starting package for twenty euros that includes these items (although the package is a bit lackluster, you can make it work). I would really recommend applying for the TYS appartments. Especially since people who found appartments via the private market sometimes ended up in very expensive places or far out of the city.

leisure & culture

Finland is an amazing country with beautiful nature and cities. I went to some national parks and beaches (Ruissalo is great). I visited Helsinki and Tampere a couple of times as I consider them the nicest cities in Finland. When it comes to the Finns themselves: They all speak English fluently, but most don't really show interest in the international students and therefore I didn't make any Finnish friends. Turku has very beautiful

and ugly parts. It is a very vibrant student city as there is always something going on and there are amazing cafes, museums, clubs, etc. UTU also provides lots of cheap services. You can pay fifty euros for CampusSport, which allows you to use the gym and attend all sports classes for the whole semester. There are cafeterias which provide student lunch and dinner for only 2,90. You can get student discounts while using public transportation.

I would strongly recommend participating in ESN activities and trips. They for instance organize parties every week and you can participate in a Finnish sitz. I went on three long trips as well; the Lofoten Islands in Norway, the Pirate Cruise to Stockholm and the Lapland trip. These trips were the most amazing and meaningful trips of my life and are quite affordable.

suggestions/tips

Tips I would give for living in Turku are the following. Get the yellow donkey republic bikes; for only seven euros per month you can use them infinitely and Turku has a lot of bike paths. When applying for TYS housing try to get an apartment in the student village, Iltakajo is very far away and it's almost impossible to get home after clubbing. Buy long distance bus or train tickets well in advance since they start really cheap (from Turku to Helsinki around 4/5 euros) and go up. Be sure to visit Villa Jarvela for the best sauna experience. Download the Aurora app to get notifications when the northern lights are visible. I saw them in Norway and Lapland, but during my semester they were also visible in Turku twice. For only twenty euros you can take a boat to Tallinn, which is very much worth visiting. Finland is more expensive than the Netherlands so you have to take that into account when budgeting for the exchange, especially alcohol is extremely expensive. If you love clubbing and want to save money go to Heidi's Bier Bar on tuesdays to get shots for one euro. Attend ice hockey games.

CONCLUSIONS

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

I would definitely recommend this destination to others. I had the best couple of months of my life and made amazing friends and memories. The trips I went on really felt like once in a lifetime opportunities.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

Report 2

faculty/college	Humanities
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	Taal- en cultuurstudies

destination city & country	Turku, Finland
how did you travel to your destination?	By plane, but will go back by boat/train
name university abroad	University of Turku
start date	24 / 08 / 2022 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	05 / 01 / 2022 (dd/mm/yyyy)

PREPARATION

exchange application process

Because of my studies (Taal en cultuurstudies) where nearly everyone goes abroad in their third year I had heard quite a few tips and stories and felt well informed on how and where to start the application process. I liked the checklist because that made it clear exactly what I still had to do. There was a bit of a delay (I think because of the transfer from offline to online application, so that was a bit stressful as I was travelling the last weeks before moving abroad, but everything was communicated well.
counselling & support at Utrecht University
I felt like there would always be someone replying to my email if I would send it and knew who to contact so that was nice.
academic preparation
I felt well prepared for going abroad, the essays and assignments abroad might have had a slightly different focus sometimes, which I had to learn to write, but I did not feel badly prepared, just learning new things.
language preparation
I did not feel that this was particularly relevant or helpful. My courses abroad were all in English and as I had already followed courses in English at UU I did not really feel it necessary to go through all the trouble of getting the language certificate. And with regards to Finnish: most people in Finland speak good English so I didn't necessarily need to learn the language. I did however do the Duolingo course and knew some Finnish beforehand as I have lived in Finland before. It is nice to know how to say thank you and please in shops (that's the same word for 'thank you' and 'please' btw, so that's easy at least :P)
finances
Well, this was my first time getting "free money" to study as I have never received the 'basisbeurs', so I knew that my finances would actually be better than in NL... Overall, Finland is about as expensive to live in as The Netherlands. Some things are a bit more expensive, but there is also really good student discounts on a lot of things.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD
study programme (content and organisational issues)
Really nice. It was easy to sign up for courses and to find my grades and such online. The signup is really late though and sometimes you only got to know that you were accepted into a course the day before the course would start, so that did get me slightly anxious sometimes.
academic quality of education activities
The courses were about as difficult as I expected them to be. There was quite a bit more focus on the learning process rather than writing really technical essays. For a lot of courses I had to write 'learning diaries' describing what I had learned that week and connecting this to stuff I already knew. I think that in this regard the Finnish university's approach is quite different to the Dutch one, but I liked it, because I could really explore my own knowledge that might be relevant to the course and my own interests.
counselling & support at receiving university abroad
There is a student centre (Disco) where you know you can always go to with questions and the introduction days were really helpful in terms of getting to know what we would need to get by in Turku as students. Both practical matters and more unofficial and fun ideas and advice which was really nice.
transfer of credits
I have not yet done this, but with all other things both universities have been quick in replying and signing all the forms and such.

STUDENT LIFE
welcome & orientation programme
<p>We received some helpful emails from the Turku University International office to help us on the way when arriving in Finland and then we had three days of orientation that spanned really wide. We got information on the student housing, Finnish courses, how to apply for courses, how to get the student lunches, etc. Then also the ESN organisation in Turku was really active and there were informal activities every evening in the first week where I got to know lots of other international students some of which would become my good friends over the course of the semester.</p>
accommodation
<p>I applied for the TYS student housing company, thinking that they would provide housing for every single international student, but this turned out to be false. I do not know if it was due to there being more international students than the past few years or just not enough housing, but I did not get an offer and had to go on a stressful house search on Facebook while travelling through Spain and France. Eventually I did find something a few days before I would leave for Finland and this turned out to be a really nice, big apartment in the city centre. However, I would still not recommend the stress so sign up immediately when you can for the housing!</p>
leisure & culture
<p>There is a lot to do in terms of leisure and culture in Finland. The Finns really value culture and thus for example a subscription to the library is free and there are quite some theatre shows, in the theatre and in the streets in the summer. On Turku.fi you can find all the events and such in English as well. At the big theatre they sometimes do theatre performances with English subtitles as well.</p> <p>There are also a lot of museums, although I did not visit as much as I would have liked to :)</p>
suggestions/tips
<p>Go on trips to the surroundings of Turku as well! Naantali for example is very nice and it is so easy to get into nature. In Finland there are every man's rights which means that the woods are everyone's and you can pick berries and mushrooms and roam free, which is amazing. You can even often go to places where it says 'private space' as long as you leave it clean.</p> <p>Use the föli bikes in spring, summer and autumn, they are really nice and all over the city! You can get a subscription for only 6 euro a month for rides <1 hour.</p> <p>Go to the North as well, it is really beautiful and visit other cities. The trains are really nice and have a good student discount.</p> <p>I would also really recommend doing a Finnish course, because it helps you get by in everyday life and this is where I met some really nice people from all over the world. The courses are really focussed on learning to speak and so it is really different from your average university course.</p>

CONCLUSIONS
would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain
<p>Yes, I would for sure. Not only are there many courses at the university which are really diverse and interesting, but the quality of education and the quality of living in Finland is just amazing. It might be quite different from what you're used to and you might find the Finns a bit closed off and weird at times, but once you get to know them and their culture it is an amazing experience.</p> <p>I am sure that I will return to Finland and Turku in the future and hopefully I'll have many more learning experiences there.</p>

do you have any additional advice or comments?

2019-2020

Report 1

permission to publish contact details	<i>optional; only if you allow students preparing for study abroad to contact you (directly)</i>
	my e-mail address <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: eeakooijman@gmail.com
faculty/college	Humanities
level	<input type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	Multilingualism and language acquisition

destination city & country	Turku, Finland
how did you travel to your destination?	by plane and bus
name university abroad	University of Turku
start date	27 / 08 / 2019 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	16 / 12 / 2019 (dd/mm/yyyy)

PREPARATION

exchange application process

Before being able to go on exchange to Turku, Finland, I needed to prepare a lot of paperwork. I was already late for the application (later than the 1st of December as is required) so I had a lot of things to catch up on. However, I think the required paperwork that I needed to get in order was easy to find on the UU website and the international office sent e-mails to remind me about things that still needed to be done.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

Everytime I had a question I felt like I could send an email to the international office at UU. Answers wouldn't take too long and one time I even had a phone call appointment with one of the employees at the international office.

academic preparation

I didn't do any academic preparation, since I had already taken all of my required master courses, I just chose courses at the UTU that seemed interesting to me.

language preparation

I didn't do any language preparation either, since I was already capable of getting by in English. However, I did do the required language assessment before going abroad.

finances

I applied for the Erasmus grant beforehand, and I also saved up a lot of money beforehand, so I wouldn't have to work during my exchange or borrow money.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD	
	study programme (content and organisational issues)
	I did quite a few courses at the same time, because the courses I liked were all given in the same period (period 1 and then some lasted two periods, so one semester). The university was easy going about following courses from different faculties, so I was able to do courses from the English department, education and language studies, finnish language and culture and nordic culture and social resilience.
	academic quality of education activities
	Education in Finland was different from education in the Netherlands, or at least what I had been used to at the UU. For a course we didn't have separate lecture and tutorial classes and for the courses that lasted the whole semester we only had one class a week. Therefore I felt like for many of my classes there was less interaction than at the UU. Another difference that is worth mentioning is the way of testing. Many courses used 'learning diaries' to see if you had understood the information given during the course. This entailed writing down a reflection on the newly learned topics per week. The academic quality really differed per course and teacher. Some courses were really challenging and interesting, where the teacher gave inspiring lectures. Other courses were less so, and there were many teacher who didn't seem used to giving lectures in front of students.
	counselling & support at receiving university abroad
	The international office at the UTU was really nice and helpful. They responded really fast to any question I had and also when I came back to the Netherlands and needed som extra documents they were really quick to respond and ready to help.
	transfer of credits
	At this moment my credits haven't been transferred yet, so I cannot say if this will go well or not. However, the university of Turku has been really quick with sending me my transcript of records.

STUDENT LIFE	
	welcome & orientation programme
	UTU had an extensive orientation programme in the first week, in which we received a lot of information and we got to meet other international students. ESN was also active in Turku, which made it easy to participate in fun activities in the beginning, when you didn't know your roommates very well yet. Everyone at ESN was really welcoming and the first week was full of different acitvities that you could participate in.
	accommodation
	For me it was really easy to find accommodation, because I was on time with the application. I would recommend signing up for accommodation as soon as possible. I even got to choose between two different housing options. Finally I chose Retrodorm, a student building just for international students, 15 minutes by bike from the city center. I could wholeheartedly reccommend this accomodation for new incoming students. We lived together with 17 people on one floor and we shared the the showers, kitchen and living room.
	leisure & culture
	If you like sports you could sign up for CampusSport, this is a membership for gyms around Turku and also group lessons. A lot of people did this. You could also become an active member at ESN, to help them organize activities. In the city there are also many museums that are worth visiting and there's beautiful nature around the city. There's a national park pretty close and a sauna by a lake if you want to relax a bit.

suggestions/tips

I would definitely suggest trying the saunas in Finland and visit Lapland if you can!

CONCLUSIONS

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

I would definitely recommend the University of Turku to others who want to study abroad. Everyone spoke English and was really welcoming. Everything was well organized and they offer interesting courses for exchange students. Also, Finland has a lot of different things to offer: not only nature, but also culture. You can decide yourself if you want to spend time in nature, in museums, partying, studying or doing sports. There's so many options!

do you have any additional advice or comments?

2014-2015

Report 1

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

PREPARATION	
exchange application process	The application process was very stressful for me because I heard from the possibility of doing an exchange period the first time at the introduction day of my study, so the official deadlines already had formally past. But I thought it was worth it because an exchange is always a very good learning process for a student. After some differences with the international office at first everything went on smoothly and I got a lot of help from everyone and the University of Turku was eager and very fast of helping me to make this exchange possible.
counselling & support at Utrecht University	The international office at the university Utrecht was very helpful and did their best to prepare me and help me with the whole application process and helped me wherever they could.
academic preparation	I read about Finland to be able to understand the culture and study process at the university of Turku.
language preparation	I worked on my English skills in my personal free time with self study of English Grammar books and Writing Skills with the Cambridge Advanced Study book. I also did an English Assessment with my tutor who then gave me tips how I can improve my English and where I have to improve it.
finances	Without the Erasmus grant I wouldn't have been able to make this trip. Further finances I got from help of my parents and my personal savings. Finland is much more expensive than the Netherlands so it was a challenge but possible.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD	
study programme (content and organisational issues)	I had the problem that some of the courses I wanted to do were already full because the inscription period was already over when I arrived but with help of the international office from the University of Turku and the professors who were teaching there it was no problem.
academic quality of education activities	The academic and also educational quality of the University of Turku was excellent. Everything made sense, went smoothly and it was a very interesting time where I learned a lot. The academic quality of the professors were excellent in their special fields and they didn't get tired of explaining and were open for discussions from an international background.
counselling & support at receiving university abroad	Very good! The whole staff of the University of Turku from all departments were excellent and helped wherever they could!

transfer of credits

They tried to help me as quick as possible with everything.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

I was assigned a tutor (finish student who is interested in getting to know other cultures) who picked me up from the train station and brought me to my student dormitory. She also organised that I have a food package for the first night because I arrived very late the first day and a so called started package from the study organisation that I have everything I needed to start my life in the dormitory. She checked in with me regularly to see if everything was alright and how my study was going. On the second day she gave me a city tour that I will know my way around Turku. She was very sweet and understanding for all cultural shocks and explained the finish culture very clear to me. I am still in contact with her. The orientation program was concerning content very helpful and explained everything very well. It was only in the beginning a bit hard to find the places where the orientation programs were held because the campus in Turku is huge. But a map was given right in the beginning and every student you would come across would always help you to find your way around.

accommodation

I was in a student dormitory Retrodorm. It was the cheapest option (280 euros/month) and the only one where I had the possibility to only stay for a three month period of time. It was okay for the price. We lived with 17 people on the floor but where we had to share the kitchen, washing machine, dryer, drying frame and two showers. The room was small but good for the price with an own toilet and sink. It sounds worse than it was. The atmosphere in the dormitory was great and every floor grew together like a family. Also the organisation who would use the kitchen, shower etc. came from itself and was no problem. I made a lot of friends living there from all over the world, who I will stay in contact with.

leisure & culture

The finish culture is very different to the Dutch or also for me known Austrian culture. The people are much more relaxed, reserved at first and sitting together with silences is completely normal. Although the Finish language is not easy to learn (I did a Beginners course for foreigners) there is no problem to communicate because nearly everyone speaks English on an advanced level. This can be compared to the Dutch. I really enjoyed meeting Finish people because in my experience they were very well mannered, always thought very well what they would say and when the ice was broken were very interesting conversation partners. Finland is also very open in general. I have never seen in my life so many alternative people around. I am used from the Netherlands as also Austria that the alternative scene is looked at with a lot of scepticism but Finland no one would look up if some rainbow colored hair would pass their way. I really liked this openness tolerance for different paths of life. Finland also has a lot of nature. My dormitory was located on a hill in the woods where a lot of rabbits and foxes passed my way. The public transport rides all the time (mostly on time) it doesn't matter if it is 12 or -18 degrees. The university student organisation gave a lot of possibilities for game days, nights, going out and trips not only around Finland but also Estonia and Russia. This was a good opportunity to get a good impression in a save environment and lots of the time also cheaper than when it would be organised privately.

suggestions/tips

Try to participate in all the public holidays. It is a great experience. A tip is to inform yourself before you go there when they are and what they are about. In Finland it is very different to the Netherlands or Austrian Public Holidays. I had a lot of research to do and I heard about most of them in my Finish Language Course,

which I am very thankful for.

CONCLUSIONS

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

Definitely! It was a great adventure that I would do again in a bet of an eye! The University of Turku is a fine institution which gives the students as also exchange students the best possibilities to develop themselves and their professional skills further. They care a lot and it is a great experience to visit a country that is so different to the rest of Western Europe.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

Be sure that you have some extra savings to get the possibility to go on the trips that are organised by the student organisations! It is cheaper to go with them but it is still a lot of money but totally worth it to do so!