

2022-2023

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: jolienknoben@gmail.com
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	Montpellier, France
how did you travel to your destination?	By train (TGV)
name university abroad	Université Paul-Valéry Montpellier 3
start date	5 / 09 / 2022 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	31 / 12 / 2022 (dd/mm/yyyy)

PREPARATION	
exchange application process	A LOT. I really advise you to start early because I was quite lost. You have to read every letter of the International Office quite well. I thought that sometimes things were too bureaucratic.
counselling & support at Utrecht University	Allright, but sometimes the IO replies quite late since they are so busy. Keep this in mind when you need them.
academic preparation	Since I did only first year's courses I didn't need to prepare. I decided to take more easy courses, because they were going to be all in French and I did not speak French sufficiently enough when I applied.
language preparation	I took 1-on-1 language courses at the Alliance française Amsterdam, to train my speaking, writing and listening skills (and grammar). I had to make the TCF test as well, in order to demonstrate my B2 level.
finances	I worked a lot during the summer before my exchange. Besides, I lived in the university residence of the CROUS, which was very cheap compared to other forms of housing. This saved me a lot of money which was very welcome, since you spend a lot of money on exchange (on trips to other cities, parties, dinner and drinks out...).

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD	
study programme (content and organisational issues)	I took most of my courses in the "Sciences de Langage" department, since this was obligatory of UU. I had courses like "Langues du monde", "Pratiques Culturelles et Médiatiques" and a German A1 course. Next to the obligatory courses I wanted to study something what would me useful for me and my further academic career (master's degree). Therefore I took some introductory courses in Economics and Management studies.
academic quality of education activities	

Montpellier - Université Paul Valéry 3

The Economics and management courses were hard, since I did not study these topics since high school and they were completely taught in French. The more language- and culture related courses were not hard and I did not have to read literature for the courses, but they were a lot. For the exams we needed to know a lot of the content by heart.
counselling & support at receiving university abroad
Per e-mail they took long to respond or were in need of several reminders. However, at the university itself I thought they were very helpful. They had an office and you could just walk in any day to ask questions.
transfer of credits
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STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme
I really recommend going to the activities of 'Erasmus Life' and 'ESN Montpellier'. You can find their agenda on their Instagram pages or Facebook. The day I arrived, I went to a picnic in Parc Peyrou organised by Erasmus and I immediately met great people. With those people I went to other activities, as well organised by Erasmus and ESN and there we made great friends. At the Uni, they also organised introductory activities but I felt like those events were more for new fulltime bachelor students, not really for Erasmus students. There was organised a lot though.
accommodation
It was very cheap and well organised of CROUS, so therefore I would recommend. IMPORTANT: I would really say you want to stay on the residence called "Boutonnet", because that one is close to the city center. My residence, called "Vert Bois" was quite far away. At night I did not feel that comfortable with biking home on my own; so I took a taxi quite often. In this manner my cheap housing was still not that cheap....
leisure & culture
Montpellier has some great museums and a beautiful opera at Place de la Comédie. In my free time, I mostly went to the beach, to a bar for drinks or to a party. Sometimes I did a hike, since the nature around Montpellier is also very beautiful.
suggestions/tips
Mountain: Pic st. Loup! Club: Le Fizz. Bar: Rebuffy! (full of other exchange students and very cheap wine) Study spot: Panacée.

CONCLUSIONS

would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain
Yes for 1000000%!! Montpellier is such an amazing city with a very nice and happy vibe, a lot of sun and a lot of nice dining/drinking spots. One third of the population is student, which makes the city very vibrant and quite open minded. I barely had any trouble with speaking English (although I mostly spoke French because I wanted to), with eating vegetarian. Next to this I felt that the French people living here were very friendly and always happy to help. They definitely were not like the stereotype that some people have about them!
do you have any additional advice or comments?
Just go studying in Montpellier please :)) and feel free to e-mail me with questions!

Montpellier - Université Paul Valéry 3**2021-2022**

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

destination city & country	Montpellier, France
how did you travel to your destination?	By train, I received the Travel Green Grant.
name university abroad	Paul Valéry III
start date	01 / 09 / 2021 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	21 / 12 / 2021 (dd/mm/yyyy)

PREPARATION

exchange application process

There were a lot of documents to fill in, but it wasn't too difficult. I did have a problem with my learning agreement, because the university in Montpellier took a lot of time to answer e-mails, so I completed the learning agreement when I was already in Montpellier, but this wasn't a problem for the Erasmus grant. I would recommend to start as early as possible to fill in all the documents to avoid stress.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

Utrecht University was very helpful. I liked the predeparture reunion where you could exchange ideas and questions with other students. The International Office always replied very quickly to e-mails.

academic preparation

I didn't prepare academically for my exchange and this was also not necessary, because the level of courses isn't too high.

language preparation

I completed the bachelor French language and culture before I went to Montpellier and this was sufficient for me to follow the courses.

finances

I had saved enough money, so I didn't have any financial problems, even though the Erasmus grant came later than expected. Montpellier was a little bit more expensive than I expected, so I would recommend to have some savings in case the Erasmus grant comes later.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)

Before leaving, I had already chose some courses to complete my learning agreement, but these were hard to find. The website is very chaotic, so often I could only find the name of courses without a description. Also the timetables were very hard to find out. In Montpellier I took a lot of time before the start of the courses to find out timetables and stuff, so this was very chaotic. However, they are very flexible in changing courses; you can still change your courses in the first weeks of the semester. It will take a lot of time, but eventually you will figure it out, so no need for stress.

Montpellier - Université Paul Valéry 3

academic quality of education activities
The quality of the courses was very different. I had some courses which were quite difficult and challenging, namely the literature courses. But there were also courses where the academic quality was not very high and which were quite easy. It was difficult to get used to the way of teaching with only talking and hardly any interactions. Even during some workgroups (TD) there was no interaction at all. Some teachers used Powerpoints, but there were also teachers who just read a piece of paper during class. There were a lot of differences in level between courses, which struck me.
counselling & support at receiving university abroad
The university in Montpellier took often quite some time to respond to e-mails, which wasn't always convenient. But the people who worked at the Erasmus bureau at the university were very kind and helpful. It was much easier to go to their office with your problems instead of sending an e-mail, because there was always someone present at the office to help you with stuff. Before the start of the courses, they organized a welcoming event for Erasmusstudents which was really nice and helpful. After the presentation, drinks and snacks were provided to get in contact with other Erasmus students. Here I met people who were planning to do some of the same courses as me, and we could figure out schedules together.
transfer of credits
I did not receive my transcript of records yet

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme
Before the start of the courses, the Erasmus office organized a welcoming event for Erasmusstudents on the 2 nd of september, a day after I arrived. This was really nice and helpful to get to know the university. After the presentation, drinks and snacks were provided to get in contact with other Erasmus students. Here I met people who were planning to do some of the same courses as me, and we could figure out schedules together.
accommodation
I stayed at the campus of the 'Institut protestant de théologie', a small private protestant theology university close to the city centre. The campus had approximately 30 student rooms with private bathroom and toilet. I was really glad I could stay there, because there were more French students staying there, so everybody spoke French which helped me to improve my language skills. From stories I heard, the kitchen was also cleaner in comparison to the student residences at Paul Valéry. The ambiance there was great and I made a lot of friends there. The only disadvantage was that it took about 35 minutes to get to the university, while the other residences were much closer to the university, but it was closer to the city centre. I would recommend staying here and if you're interested you can look up the institut on internet and call the intendant if there is a room available (mails often don't work in France). He is very kind and helpful.
leisure & culture
Montpellier is a great city to live in. There are plenty of options for leisure and culture. The city is not too big and not too small, which is perfect. The city centre is really beautiful and there are a lot of bars, restaurants and clubs. The climate is great too and the beach is about 50 minutes away with public transport. The nature outside Montpellier is beautiful, you can go to the mountains to hike. And there are also cities nearby which are great to visit, such as Carcassonne. There is also a student organisation for Erasmus students called Erasmus Student Network, which organises a lot of activities, such as trips and parties, where you can meet other international students. I joined those activities especially in the beginning when I didn't know a lot of people yet.
suggestions/tips

Montpellier - Université Paul Valéry 3

I would recommend to search an accomodation outside of the cité universitaire, because I heard from other Erasmus students that the cité universitaire from Paul Valéry can be quite lonely if you don't know people there. I would also recommend not to stress in the beginning if everything at the university seems chaotic. It will all work out!

CONCLUSIONS

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

Yes I would definitely recommend to go to Montpellier. The university is just fine and the city is really great. I enjoyed it a lot.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

Enjoy it as much as you can!

2019-2020**Report 1**

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

destination city & country	Montpellier, France
how did you travel to and from your destination?	Flixbus to Montpellier and train back.
name university abroad	Université Paul-Valéry
start date	20/01 /2020 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	30/05 /2020 (dd/mm/yyyy)

PREPARATION

exchange application process

The exchange application process is a LOT of work. There are a lot of forms to fill in, a lot of signatures to be collected and a lot of deadlines to follow. For me as a chaotic person this was very hard and stressful and I found it not so clear how to complete everything, especially on the side of the French university. For example finding courses to fill in the learning agreement was nearly impossible via their website.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

From the side of Utrecht University there was a lot of support and they gave a lot of instructions and reminders for everything.

academic preparation

In my case there was no case of academic preparation.

language preparation

Montpellier - Université Paul Valéry 3

I think on the website it said that a minimum of B1 level of french was required to follow the courses (which were completely in french). I had followed two language courses in my first year of university (Frans taalverwerving 1 & 2) which had brought me approximately on that level already. I also had had French in high school for six years. Although officially I had reached that level it was quite some time ago at the moment of the beginning of my exchange (I think two years). I had to remind myself a bit because I had not spoke french in the meantime. I generously advice you to do this well and start on time. I was planning on doing this but eventually I ended up just watching half of a french series on netflix and going to language cafe four times (this is something I also definitely advice: language cafe is every wednesday in cafe marktzicht and is perfect to practice and learn a language, it is super useful and superfun. And also the chrome extension Language Learning through Netflix is very good). I regretted a LOT that I hadn't done more to boost my french level. It would have made a huge difference in my competence at location.

finances

I had saved up quite some money so I didn't need to worry about money in France.

(interrupted) STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

welcome & orientation programme

The welcome and orientation programme organised by the university was not so extensive. We had one Erasmus meeting at the beginning before all the classes started which was very nice because that way you could meet all the international students. I did courses in linguistics which is not such a popular study so I didn't have any courses with someone I met there but that was not an obstacle for staying in contact. On the other hand the ESSN organisation had a looot of events to meet other international students in the city.

study programme (content and organisational issues)

This is a complete different world than the Netherlands. There is almost no organisation. You cannot find anything online, no dates of tests, no powerpoints, no planning or any other information ahahah. It was extremely chaotic. I had one course were there was not one clear instruction of reading material so we only had the lectures and some documents with super vage and chaotic notes of the professor to learn for the tests.

academic quality of education activities

I thought the academic quality of the courses was very different and a lot lower than in Utrecht. The whole atmosphere is very different. It feels more like high school in France. There are no seminars, only lectures (although they do have the difference in the timetable, in reality there is no difference) with big classes with unmotivated but still weirdly strict disciplined students. It happened all the time that the teacher was mad or had to ask for silence. A huge difference was also that nothing from the course would be available online, so everyone was writing over the fast and full powerpoints (if there were any) like crazy, so you could not even concentrate on what the professor was saying.

transfer of credits

This part is not yet completed in my case so I don't know yet.

CORONAVIRUS CONSEQUENCES

support guidance of host university

There was zero guidance. I had to personally e-mail every one of my professors (whose e-mail adresses were already hard to nearly impossible to find in some cases) to ask how the courses would continue after the

Montpellier - Université Paul Valéry 3

university closed down. The whole university decided to not do online classes. The tests would be only about the matter we discussed in the physical classes.
support guidance of home university
From the home university we got the advice to return home and the option to follow the last 'blok' from Utrecht. However I stayed in Montpellier and took the time for my french courses and language competence.
online offer and quality of digital courses
x
suggestions/tips on digital exchange
x

CONCLUSIONS

would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain
I am not sure. I had an amazing time in Montpellier and I enjoyed the content of the courses I followed and the opportunity to boost my french level, but the university on itself was not good.
do you have any additional advice or comments?

2018-2019**Report 1**

permission to publish contact details** <i>See end note for * and **</i>	<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: j.l.j.heesewijk@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	French Language and Culture

destination city & country	Montpellier, France
name university abroad	université Paul Valéry, Montpellier III
start date	11 / 09 / 2018 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	21 / 12 / 2018 (dd/mm/yyyy)

PREPARATION

exchange application process
Because of some changes in my study programme my stay abroad took place a bit earlier than expected, which caused some stress. In the end everything was well arranged and I got all the time to prepare for my time abroad.

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counselling & support at Utrecht University
Utrecht University helped me during my preparation. There was Mrs Kremers that told me to relax and the international office was there to answer my e-mails every time.
academic preparation
I study French Language and Culture in the Netherlands which, of course, really helped me during my stay in France. I also learned English and Spanish which were also useful as a preparation.
language preparation
As I have already said I study French Language and Culture at the UU. The language courses I followed in Utrecht were a great preparation for my stay in France.
finances
I had saved some money to use in France and the Erasmus grant that was about to come my way would be really helpful for me.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)
I followed courses at the linguistics faculty of the French university, as well as an erasmus course about French culture and history and an additional French course.
academic quality of education activities
The way of teaching is really different from what I was used to in Utrecht. Teachers seemed less professional to me and the university seemed poorer (for example: teachers had to bring their own beamers and laptops).
counselling & support at receiving university abroad
I am not very positive about this. My personal tutor in France for example did not answer my e-mails and it took some time before we could finally meet so she could sign my Contrat d'études. The international office was better I think because they were more helpful and were always there for us.
transfer of credits
Making timetables was like a big puzzle, but eventually I had one. I sent the Transcript of Records to the international office of Utrecht University.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme
This was great. In the beginning there were a lot of events and activities especially for (international) students in which I met a lot of people. A few of those people I still call my friends and I have even met them again since I'm back in the Netherlands.
accommodation
There was no place for me at the "cité universitaire". This caused a lot of stress because I did not want to arrive in Montpellier without a room/space to live. Fortunately a French friend of mine recommended me roomlala, which is a site where you can rent rooms per month. Here I found a room in a nice student house.
leisure & culture
There were all kind of activities and events for international students. The organisation ESN (European Student Network) organized a lot of parties I went to sometimes and with my friends I visited some nice cities in the environment of Montpellier.

Montpellier - Université Paul Valéry 3

Every first Sunday of the month all museums were for free, and so I went to visit the Musée Fabre, which was very interesting.

And then there was of course the beach which was situated 30 minutes from the city, I have been there some times.

suggestions/tips

I would recommend everyone to join the parties and to go to erasmus activities because it is a great way of making new friends which makes your Erasmus experience incredible. You can follow all the activities/events on facebook pages and in whatsapp groups.

CONCLUSIONS

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

100% yes. The city of Montpplier is really great - not too big and not too small - and the university is fine. It was very interesting for me to see how courses were given in an other country and I learned a lot from other students who had other ways of thinking than we have in the Netherlands.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

Don't be afraid to go, just do it if it is possible.

Report 2

faculty/college	Universiteit Utrecht
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	Franse Taal en Cultuur/French Language and Culture

destination city & country	MONTPELLIER, France
name university abroad	Université Paul Valéry III
start date	03 / 09 / 2018 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	01 / 02 / 2019 (dd/mm/yyyy)

PREPARATION

exchange application process

It was very important to have all the needed documents filled in on time so that there will be no problems with your application for your stay abroad. It was not very difficult to do so, you just need to make sure to not miss the deadlines and have everything signed on time.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

The International Office of Utrecht University is very helpful and supportive when it comes to students who are preparing to study abroad. With a few counselling sessions with all concerned students they prepared us with examples, experiences of students who already went abroad etc. It was very helpful.

academic preparation

Montpellier - Université Paul Valéry 3

I didn't really prepare myself academically because I expected it to be comparable with what I learned at Utrecht University.
language preparation
Before going to my host country/university it was important for me to revisit some grammatical aspects of French and to broaden my vocabulary a bit to feel a little bit more at ease with myself.
finances
I made a financial plan with my savings, my incomes (loan and grant) and the costs I was going to have every month. In that way I had a more clear idea of how everything was going to go financially.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)
I had to choose my subjects within the criteria of the agreement between the two universities, so I was not free to choose whatever subject I wanted. However I managed to choose a variety of very interesting subjects, from Russian to phonology. The organisation was difficult though, because we didn't get a lot of help with the inscriptions. We needed to make our own timetables and figure out on our own where our classes were given. But once we had it all figured out it was less difficult.
academic quality of education activities
The quality of the courses was pretty good. The teachers were good and qualified. The only thing I didn't like and wasn't used to was the fact that we had no tests except in the examweeks. That caused me sometimes lack of motivation.
counselling & support at receiving university abroad
If needed there was counselling and support available, I didn't use it though.
transfer of credits
The transfer of credits was fluent and well done. I haven't had any problems with it.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme
There were a lot of student orientation programmes and students who organised welcome parties and barbecues etc. I didn't really partake in it because I didn't feel like it, but there were a lot of activities for those who were interested!
accommodation
I found accomodation on my own with help of people I already knew in the region of Montpellier. I did apply for a room on campus, but the end of July we heard that it was not possible for us (me and a friend) to get rooms on campus because everything was already taken. That was a real deception because we needed to find accomodation on our own as soon as possible. In the end it all worked out.
leisure & culture
There were a lot of cultural activities, organised trips to cities nearby, parties to attend etc. Montpellier was an incredible city to live in!
suggestions/tips
Go out, make friends and enjoy your experience abroad to the fullest! This is a once in a lifetime kind of period in your life you will never forget!

Montpellier - Université Paul Valéry 3

CONCLUSIONS	
would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain	
Yes I most certainly do. The only thing you must not do is stress because the universities here are not as organised and strict as Utrecht. You need to figure out a lot of things on your own, so don't panic is something doesn't go the way you wanted it. Montpellier is a beautiful city full of life, I loved living and studying here. I really recommend it to anyone who loves the climate, the people and the "french spirit"!	
do you have any additional advice or comments?	
/	

2017-2018**Report 1**

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

destination city & country	Montpellier, France
name university abroad	Université Paul-Valéry Montpellier 3
start date	04 / 09 / 2017 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	22 / 12 / 2017 (dd/mm/yyyy)

PREPARATION	
exchange application process	
The application process was not very hard or complicated, you just have to start in time. Maybe already once you start in september, start with orientating and looking on websites of universities you like. Also, it is not like you are committing to the courses you choose at this point, you can always change afterwards.	
counselling & support at Utrecht University	
I am very satisfied with the support from the international office humanities, they always answer quickly your e-mails, are very helpful and you can always just pass by their office on the Drift if you have a question.	
academic preparation	
I did some individual preparation for the specific courses I wanted to do in Montpellier. For example, I have followed philosophy and spanish courses in Montpellier. I wasn't sure if was sufficiently prepared so during summer I studied some spanish and also read an introduction to philosophy.	
language preparation	
For the language preparation I didn't do that much since I already study the language I will need in France. It was possible to do a preparation language course in Montpellier before starting the semester, but I didn't participate in it.	
finances	

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Finances were not really a problem since I have a studentloan which i can elevate if needed, also I received the biggest part of the Erasmus grant before I left which was useful.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)

The organisation was very relaxed. We actually choose whatever courses we wanted from all faculties, there were no restrictions. I chose a wide variety of courses. In the first week we could try out various courses and afterwards we had to make a choice. I really like it that it was not so strict as at home.

academic quality of education activities

In general I'm satisfied with the academic quality of the courses. It's hard to judge since I followed courses at a lot of different faculties. I think I improved my French a lot during the courses, especially the so-called "speaking language", I learned a lot of vocabulary that I wouldn't have learned at home.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

The Erasmus office there organized several meetings and kept us up to date about everything we need to know. I am very satisfied with the way they guided us through all the organisational issues.

transfer of credits

There is no problem at all with the transfer of credits. The semester ended with Christmas and at the end of January you can see the grades in the online learning environment of the university. Afterwards they will send the transcript of records to Utrecht and to you.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

There was not really a welcome & orientation programme. There were two information meetings, but they were more about the organisational issues at the university. It was also possible to participate in a buddy programme, but unfortunately my buddy didn't communicate very well so in the end we didn't really meet, but I heard a lot of positive stories from other students about it.

accommodation

I was lucky to get accommodation from the university, in a student residence on the campus. The rent is really low if you compare it to the private sector, or to Utrecht general. A minus was that we had to buy all our kitchen equipment, which we didn't know in advance. In the beginning this caused some frustration and unexpected costs. But on the other hand the residence was well-situated, there was a 24/7 reception and there were a lot of international students which is good in the beginning. Also it's possible for international students to apply for a subsidy for accommodation of 90 euros per month.

leisure & culture

Montpellier is a great city to study. The weather is great, also during the wintersemester. The atmosphere in the south of France is very relaxed, the French don't worry so much there. There are lots of possibilities for cultural trips in and outside the city. There are a lot of small cities close to Montpellier that one can visit during the weekend. There are also various organisations that organise trips to nature or other cities.

suggestions/tips

I would suggest everyone who goes to Montpellier or France for that matter to be very open/chill towards new things. In France things are organised very differently from in the Netherlands. Usually that means more administration, longer waiting etc. You'll have the feeling that things are unnecessarily complicated. For

Montpellier - Université Paul Valéry 3

example, when you have to open a bank, insurance or have to fill out dossiers for the student residence. In the beginning you might want to protest or not do all those things, but in the end I decided to just go with their system and practice being patient. It is good tho arrive at least one week in advance to take care of this adminstrational stuff. Although it can be a bit hard/overwhelming when you arrive, I would like to say that this normal, seeing how different everything is organized in the south of France. Also it would be good to at least accept that there will be moments where you will be homesick/missing family or friends. Because when I left I had this perfect image of studying abroad, which was unrealistic. Just like at home there will be positive and negative moments.

CONCLUSIONS

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

Yes , I would recommend Montpellier to everybody. The city, the campus and the surroundings are very beautiful. The people there are very helpful and relaxed concerning the organisational issues and as a lifestyle in general. The weather and the cultural possibilities are great.It's a great way to get to know other people, cultures and become more independent.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

2016 – 2017**Report 1**

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

destination city & country	Montpellier, France
name university abroad	Université Paul Valéry Montpellier III
start date	05 / 09 / 2016 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	16 / 12 / 2016 (dd/mm/yyyy)

PREPARATION

exchange application process

The application process takes a long time and you have to fill in a lot of forms. If you start early you don't have to stress about getting someone's autograph at the last moment or about deadlines. Also sometimes the administration at the receiving university is a little slower or more chaotic than you would expect, so watch out for that.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

The International Office counsels and supports very well. They have answers to every question and respond usually very fast too. They are super friendly and will help you with anything, also when you have already left for you semester abroad.

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academic preparation
I didn't really prepare myself academically. I took French language acquisition courses (TV1, 2 and 3) and that's it. In France I only took introductory classes, so I didn't need any academic preparation other than my level of French.
language preparation
The French language and culture bachelor is completely in French and for me that was sufficient.
finances
I didn't have any problems financially. Before I left I had all the money I needed and even though the Erasmus grant came later than expected, everything went well and I didn't have any trouble.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)
The first two/three weeks of my stay in France were really chaotic. Nothing went as planned and I had to redo almost my entire course list. The biggest problem was the time table over there: course didn't overlap completely but too much to do both courses, classes were too full cause only one of the classes was scheduled at a reasonable hour and so on. Some courses completely disappeared or expected a little more background than stated . But you will definitely figure it out, the receiving university was really relaxed about changing courses even in that meant you missed the first three or four classes.
academic quality of education activities
Nothing spectacular but better than the expectations I made reading the reports from students who went to the same university before me. I think the quality was not outstanding but it was good enough, it challenged me because it was still in French.
counselling & support at receiving university abroad
The counselling and support at the university of Utrecht felt more personal but there was nothing wrong with the counselling in France. People were really helpful and they did everything they could to solve your problems. Don't be afraid to ask the people of the receiving university for help.
transfer of credits
Has not happened yet. For me, I have to wait until all students have done the retake exams they wanted to do and the professors have graded those, so that takes a really long time.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme
There was one meeting with all Erasmus students where they explained everything about the university and how everything worked. After that you could contact your coordinator. I thought the welcome and orientation programme was minimally organised and I still had a lot of questions but this way you have to talk to other Erasmus students to exchange problems and solutions. On the contrary, ESN organized a lot of things and you get to know some many people, so I recommend going there.
accommodation
I stayed at a student residence that the university recommended. The room was really small, made for sleeping only, it wasn't really a room you could study or chill in. Also, there was almost no contact with neighbors and I

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felt really isolated sometimes. I really recommend looking for your own place to stay with other Erasmus people or even local people, not something you find via the university (cité universitaire).
leisure & culture
Really good. There is so much to do and to see in Montpellier and also around Montpellier. I didn't have enough time to see everything cause the options are limitless.
suggestions/tips
Don't go live in a cité universitaire, even though it feels safer because you are assured of a room when you arrive in the city. Everyone I talked to said it is really easy to find a place to live outside of cité universitaire and it is so much more fun. Also try to go to as many as possible ESN events, cause you will meet the same people and they can become your 'steady' group of friends.

CONCLUSIONS

would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain
Yes, very much so. It is different and chaotic at first, but I think that ultimately that is what makes it so much fun. The atmosphere around the university campus is really good, everyone is relaxed and doesn't judge you. Most of the professors have a passion for the subject they teach and are willing to help you with anything. The weather is especially in the beginning of the semester really good and it just feels so good to be in Montpellier in general.
do you have any additional advice or comments?
Go to the events ESN organizes, they are really fun and they help you meet other Erasmus students.

Report 2

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

destination city & country	Montpellier, France
name university abroad	Université Paul Valéry III
start date	08 / 09 / 2016 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	18 / 12 / 2016 (dd/mm/yyyy)

PREPARATION

exchange application process
This went very easily. Everything was explained very well in emails and on the website of the UU. The university also gives you a nice hand-out in which you can see exactly when the deadlines are for the documents you have to sign and hand in. Commence as soon as you can, because it takes some time before everything is signed!
counselling & support at Utrecht University
The support from the UU was great! As I explained above, they will inform you very well and early so you will not miss a document or a deadline. You can also always contact them.

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academic preparation
?
language preparation
I study French, so I did not really prepare myself by following extra French courses, because all my courses were already in French, but if you do not study French I would really recommend you to follow some courses.
finances
It is useful to write down for yourself what your incomes and outcomes will be. Also make sure you start as soon as possible with arranging your Erasmus Grant. I must say that I thought I would spend less money than I eventually did, so make sure you also have some savings.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)
Because I study French, I was free to choose every course that I liked. I must say that this was a quite difficult job, because this university only gives the name and amount of ECTS of the course. There will be no description, which can make it difficult to decide whether you would like it or not. But don't worry! You can still change courses within your first 3 weeks/month of your stay. They don't matter at all. You can join classes and decide afterwards if you would like to follow this course or not. One tip: try to make this decision as soon as possible, otherwise you would miss a lot of courses/information.
academic quality of education activities
The academic quality was quite a shock. The teachers I had didn't put any effort in making PowerPoints or writing things on the board. They were literally sitting behind their desk with a mic in their hands. I have spoken with another friend of mine who studied in Paris and she said it was exactly the same over there. I think it is just the way of teaching in France. If your French is on a B1 level, I shouldn't worry that much, you'll get used to it quite fast.
counselling & support at receiving university abroad
The counselling and support was very good! There was a special office for Erasmus students with people who could help you anytime.
transfer of credits
I received my notes within a month I guess, so that is quite fast.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme
There is a welcome programme special for Erasmus students. They will give a lot of information about it in the first days, so you won't miss a thing. You shouldn't be scared to make less friends, a lot of things are being organised in the city for students and Erasmus students.
accommodation
I stayed at a campus (Voie Domitienne). This campus looked very well even though the rooms were quite small. Also, it is located 15 minutes from the center (by tram), which was quite difficult sometimes. The campus was great, really, but if you have the opportunity to hire a room/an apartment in the centre, I would recommend that. The centre is awesome and by living there, I feel, you will have the full experience of living in France.
leisure & culture

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The city is awesome!! It is not too big and not too small and the centre is filled with shops, cute little streets, restaurants, parks and some beautiful houses/monuments. Also the food in the restaurants is fantastic! The nightlife of Montpellier is also great! You will find nice bars and little clubs in almost the same area. You do not have to take the tram to go from one bar to the other. You can also go to the beach by tram.

suggestions/tips

Centre commercial Polygone (if you want to shop and have all the shops in one building ;))

The beach

Arc de Triomphe (beautiful, and also close to a big park with a nice view)

Club Panama, Barberousse, Shakespeare, Rockstore (if you want to go out for a beer or party)

L'Esplanade (park)

CONCLUSIONS

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

YES YES YES! If you do not want to live in a city which is too big, then Montpellier would be perfect for you! You can find and do everything of the centre and enjoy the French lifestyle. Don't be scared to feel alone, because there are a lot of things organised for you as an Erasmus student!

do you have any additional advice or comments?

Start on time with signing and sending your documents to the sending and receiving institution.

AND ENJOY!!!! It is over before you know

Report 3

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

destination city & country	Montpellier, France
name university abroad	Université Paul Valéry III
start date	7 / 09 / 2016 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	18 / 12 / 2016 (dd/mm/yyyy)

PREPARATION

exchange application process

The application process wasn't too difficult. It's a lot of paperwork, but if you just follow the steps and keep yourself to the deadlines it's doable.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

Utrecht University has held several meetings with information for students who wanted to go on an exchange. This was very helpful because they explain how it works, what you can expect, what you have to do in order to

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be able to go abroad. In addition, you can always plan a meeting with the counselor of the international office so in general this was pleasant.
academic preparation
I'm studying French language and culture, so the academic (as well as the language) preparation was perfectly well in order to go to France.
language preparation
I have followed all the language classes of French at Utrecht University, I was used to having classes in French, having to talk and write in French, so the language preparation was perfect. If you don't study French, I would strongly recommend you to follow the language courses of at least TV1 and TV2 in Utrecht.
finances
I applied for an Erasmus grant, I get a student grant (studiefinanciering) and I applied for a grant for the public transport (OV-vergoeding). All together, you get quite some money, but keep in mind that you are going on trips, eating out, going out, etc. so for me even this was not enough to cover the costs but if you pay attention to your expenses it can definitely be sufficient.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)
At the Université Paul Valéry, you have several faculties, they call it "UFR". You're supposed to follow 75% of all your courses in one UFR. I don't know if I got that 75%, but I follow a lot of my courses from the UFR 2 : langues et cultures étrangères. You can't find any course descriptions online or at the university itself, so you will have to follow all of the courses you think are interesting in in the first couple of weeks. That was the actual advice the erasmus counselor gave us. After the first three or maybe four weeks, you'll have to have your definite schedule and you can get all the paperwork done (make changes in Learning Agreement, get the autographs, etc.). Pay attention to the fact that there are a lot of courses for which you can only get 2 or 3 ECTS. That means you'll have to follow way more courses than in Utrecht. I had 9 classes for example. The plus side was the fact that we barely got any homework. The downside was the fact that at the end of the semester, you had to study 15 weeks of content for 9 courses and the exams were all in one week, some people had 3 or 4 exams in one day.
academic quality of education activities
The courses I followed were mostly introduction courses. The academic quality was okay for some classes, but not really high for most of them. We didn't have to write any papers or do research. Most of it was just plain studying facts. This could be due to the fact that the courses were introductory, but I doubt it. Also, some of the teachers were not that good. 90% of them had never heard of powerpoints, there were no books from which we could learn, we only had to listen and write. Which was sometimes quite difficult because it was all in French and some teachers talk with an accent or really fast.
counselling & support at receiving university abroad
This was organised pretty good. There were students from the university who received us, they did the paperwork and made the student cards for us and answered our questions. In the first three or four weeks their office was open every day so you could go ask questions or advice about anything. After the first few weeks, their office was opened once a week. There was also the international office from the university, where you could go if you had troubles with classes or if you needed an autograph for any of the documents needed. I have a good experience when it comes to the counselling and support at Paul Valéry.
transfer of credits

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I only just finished my last assignment, which had some delay due to miscommunication so I still have to transfer the credits.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

There were some meetings at the university for the Erasmus students. You could meet other students or just go there and get the information you needed. There was also ESN, which was really nice because they organised parties and other events for the Erasmus students which was really cool.

accommodation

I stayed at a campus. My campus was fine because it was cheap (244 euros a month) but it was not that cosy and I barely had any interaction with other students. They were trying to make an effort to change that though. There were movie nights and soccer tournaments and a halloween party etc. It depends on what effort you make to make friends at your campus and you've got to have some luck with your "house".

leisure & culture

I love Montpellier the city. You don't even have to do anything special there, just walk through the streets, visit the shops, have lunch or dinner in any of the cute restaurants or relax in the park. There is a beach at 13 km, but I only visited it once because it wasn't easy to get there with trams and busses. Also, going out is great. There are several cool bars with cheap mojitos, shots or "special" beer and some clubs that stay open until 7 am. Because there are so many young people and students, there is always life at night in the city. There are also a lot of cultural events : expositions, wine tastings, the christmas market, culinary markets, montpellier en lumières, etc. Also, the atmosphere is so relaxed, anything and anyone is accepted. There are a lot of street artists who make music or do tricks, dance groups, acrobature, anything. It's a really stimulating environment if you are a creative person or if you just want to enjoy the sun and like going out a lot.

suggestions/tips

I really loved it there, so I suggest you should go to Montpellier!

CONCLUSIONS

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

Yes, I would. The classes may not have been the best, but I thought it was interesting and a really good experience to have followed courses at another university for once. Also, it's so good for your personal development and you get to make friends from all over the world. For me, it was a great experience and I wouldn't have want to miss it.

do you have any additional advice or comments?