

**Germany – Berlin - Humboldt Universität zu Berlin****2022-2023****Report 1**

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

destination city & country	Berlin, Germany
how did you travel to your destination?	Car
name university abroad	Humboldt Universität
start date	01 / 10 / 2022 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	18 / 02 / 2023 (dd/mm/yyyy)

**PREPARATION**

## exchange application process

The application process was quite confusing to me, especially because the website of the Humboldt Universität has the information you need, but is difficult to find the right page on. I really only got the information that would have made me less stressed months earlier at the beginning of the semester. If you e-mail the coordinator at Humboldt with specific questions though, you will get a quick and clear response. Managing the communications between the international offices at the UU and Humboldt, the abroad coordinator and programme coordinator of my programme and the coordinator at Humboldt remained a challenge.

## counselling &amp; support at Utrecht University

Sometimes I did not know who to e-mail with a certain question, but everyone was helpful! The responses were quick, which was especially nice for things that needed signing.

## academic preparation

The academic preparation was good; at Humboldt I followed different kinds of courses, but on average the level was comparable to my own programme at the UU.

## language preparation

My German was definitely good enough to understand the courses I followed in German. The language course I followed in September really helped, despite the fact that I already did a minor in German earlier. It was especially helpful for daring to speak up in class, despite not having perfect grammar.

## finances

I did not have to do a lot of financial preparations. The only thing I had some issues with is how the "huurtoeslag" for my student apartment works when you sublet it temporarily, but I feel that the UU does not have to help with such problems.

**STUDY ABROAD PERIOD**

## study programme (content and organisational issues)

The study programme is very flexible at Humboldt. You can follow basically any course you like, although you only get preference for getting in to courses of your own department (at least in my case at

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Geschichtswissenschaften). It helps to be able to follow classes in German, because then you can really pick the topics that you like.
academic quality of education activities
The quality is high, especially of the courses only taught to Master's students. The texts are interesting to read and in most classes, we had good debates about the topic that was being taught. In some classes, students organised seminars in groups. It was nice to organise a seminar, but sometimes these seminars remained a bit superficial.
counselling & support at receiving university abroad
As mentioned above, the website of the university is not very useful, but the personal support through e-mail was very good!
transfer of credits
At the beginning of the semester we got information about the amount of ECTS that you can get for each type of German course. I would have preferred to have this information sooner, as that would have made it easier to plan my courses, but when I had it, the information was very clear.

**STUDENT LIFE**

welcome & orientation programme
The HUGS programme at Humboldt is great! They organise many fun activities. I only went to two or three, but if you want to get more involved, that is definitely possible. They offer a good mix of more low-key social activities and trips to for example museums.
accommodation
Like Utrecht, Berlin has a big housing problem. It is important to start looking in time. The city is very big, so it is important not to expect that you will live in the city centre. There are many scammers online, so be careful. I luckily found a place myself, but Humboldt also offers a limited amount of places in their dorms (that I have heard are nice, despite being quite far from the city centre).
leisure & culture
The cultural life in Berlin is amazing! This is perhaps what I enjoyed most about my stay in Berlin. You can go out to a concert, performance or club every day of the week if you want and have time to do so. There is something for everyone and most places have discounts for students, there are many free performances as well.
suggestions/tips
There are many great things to do in Berlin that I would suggest, but the app "Rausgegangen" offers a nice overview as well. For studying at Humboldt, I recommend looking at the courses they offer in cooperation with the FU/Max Planck Institut/TU as well. I followed one of these courses and really enjoyed it. Furthermore, the intensive language course that Humboldt offers at the beginning of the year is something I would recommend to everyone; not just to learn the language, but also to learn a bit about the city and get to know people from day 1.

**CONCLUSIONS**

would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain
I would absolutely recommend Berlin and the Humboldt University! The university has the advantage that it is right in the city centre, so you feel like you really experience Berlin every day. Berlin has a lively cultural scene

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(and of course great clubs) as well as wonderful libraries, so it offers a nice combination of studying and fun during a semester abroad.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

If you have the choice, I would recommend to go during the summer semester. Berlin is very grey in winter (even more so than the Netherlands), so although I had a great time during the winter semester, I think it could have been even better in the summer.

**Report 2**

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

destination city & country	Berlin, Germany
how did you travel to your destination?	Train
name university abroad	Humboldt University
start date	05 / 09 / 2022 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	18 / 02 / 2023 (dd/mm/yyyy)

**PREPARATION**

exchange application process

The Humboldt University website is very unclear, so it took a long time to figure out about the course availability and other important information, like amount of credits. Besides this, the application process (especially from Utrecht's side) was clear.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

The international office was always available for questions and replied relatively quickly to emails.

academic preparation

Because of doing a master's in Utrecht, I was prepared more than enough for the courses in Berlin.

language preparation

I did a month-long intensive German course in September, just before the semester started, as well as a 4-hour weekly course throughout the semester. However, I chose English-taught master's courses for the semester, but be aware that the English course offer isn't as extensive as the German one.

finances

I had a parttime job before I left for Berlin, so I had some money on my savings account. The monthly Erasmus grant and travel compensation for DUO help as well. Germany is also cheaper than the Netherlands in some aspects, although inflation hit here as well of course.

**STUDY ABROAD PERIOD**

study programme (content and organisational issues)

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I very much enjoyed my courses. I really liked about the course offer at HU that the long titles and content were so specific and contextualised, for example Anthropology of Memory: Eastern Europe's between the 'Posts' or Reparative Ecologies: New concepts for urban environments from feminist theory. You know what you choose at least. The class structure is very informal and all my classes were discussion-based. My teachers were very knowledgeable and teacher-student relationships were non-hierarchical.

On the other hand, the organisation from HU can be somewhat chaotic. There are a lot of things you need to figure out yourself regarding ECTS for example.

## academic quality of education activities

The quality is as good as Utrecht I would say, there is also a lot of focus on critical thinking, forming your own opinions, and contributing to class discussions, some things that French students struggled with for example, since they are used to different class formats. The work load was a bit lower for me in Berlin as compared to Utrecht.

## counselling &amp; support at receiving university abroad

I had a contact person from Gender Studies at Humboldt and she organised an online meeting just before the semester started to discuss some practical issues and to meet the other exchange students. That was very helpful and I had email contact with her a few times since then.

## transfer of credits

There are a lot of forms you need to fill in for the transfer of credits, so this isn't an automatic process, but you need to put in some work. Germany is bureaucratic and loves paper, just like the university, more so than the Netherlands.

**STUDENT LIFE**

## welcome &amp; orientation programme

There is sadly no orientation programme by the university. I guess I was lucky enough to find friends during the German course, sometimes in my regular courses, and to have been introduced to the other Gender Studies exchange students because of the online meeting I mentioned above. But it might be difficult to find friends for this reason. Moreover, in most of my master's courses, I was one of the few international students, and the German students are a bit more reserved, but don't let this discourage you from approaching them ;)

## accommodation

It is very hard to find housing! Start looking on time and expect to put in some work. Only a few weeks before my move to Berlin, I found a room via a friend of a friend (of a friend), so network is key here. They often don't reply on WG-gesucht because they receive so many responses.

## leisure &amp; culture

Berlin is amazing for culture of course! There are so many nice museums, cinemas, clubs, bars, and cultural events (Berlinale, Berlin Art Week, Transmediale, CTM festival etc.)

Regarding sports, I would recommend bouldering or swimming, Berlin has nice public swimming pools for a low price. The university also has their own sports membership.

## suggestions/tips

I shared some tips above!

**CONCLUSIONS**

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

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Yes! Berlin is amazing and I really enjoyed my time at the university here, but expect to do a lot of organisational work yourself. Regarding the city, it can be overwhelming and I got especially frustrated sometimes with the size of the city and the long transport times.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

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**2019-2020****Report 1**

faculty/college	Humanities faculty
level	<input type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	Media, Art and Performance RMA

destination city & country	Berlin, Germany
how did you travel to your destination?	By bus
name university abroad	Humboldt University Berlin
start date	25 / 09 / 2019 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	15 / 02 / 2020 (dd/mm/yyyy)

**PREPARATION**

## exchange application process

If a masters student wants to go for an exchange semester, the preparations need to be started well in advance - the application deadline for the next year was December 2019, meaning, roughly 3 months after the start of the Masters programme at the Utrecht University. Which, for an international student, who has just arrived in Utrecht, is a decision somewhat difficult to be made. I decided for the exchange for personal reasons - with a specific goal in mind to be in Berlin. Initially, I was told this would be not so easy to organize as my study programme did not have a direct agreement with the media studies department at the Humboldt University but we managed to work around it with the agreement between musicology departments.

## counselling &amp; support at Utrecht University

After the agreement through musicology departments was made, the international office at the Utrecht university was very supportive. All the documents were assembled, the signatures gained without much problem. The introductory Erasmus descriptions at the Utrecht University is rather well composed, so it is easy enough to follow the to - do list.

## academic preparation

I could not say there was academic preparation, to be honest. But I was very excited to become part of the Humboldt University for a semester, as a quite distinguished prof. within media studies - Wolfgang Ernst - is teaching there. So I did make myself familiarised with his work before arrival.

## language preparation

I took an intense summer course offered by the Humboldt University. The course lasted the whole September, from Monday to Friday, 9.00 - 14.00 o'clock and costed 400 eur which is a good price for a language course.

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There was an entrance exam that placed you in a certain level group - i got language level B.2.1., even though my actual level is a little lower - looking back I should have probably changed back to a lower group to get more ground knowledge.

## finances

The Erasmus + grant is nice to have but covers just a small part of the expenses during the exchange, which has to be taken into account. I am still on the Dutch student loan, as well as being employed by the UU part time, doing long distance work, for which I feel very grateful about. I am not sure I would have been able to finance the exchange if my situation had been different.

**STUDY ABROAD PERIOD**

## study programme (content and organisational issues)

It would have been very nice if someone had given a more in depth introduction into the workings of the programme - how does the Humboldt Modulabschluss process works. I initially picked around 9 courses which seemed a lot, only to realize that each course does not require an exam at the end of it. A Modulabschluss counts as a lecture, a seminar and an essay at the end of it, comprising 10 ECTS. The courses, though, were very interesting and very complimentary to the courses already taken at the UU.

## academic quality of education activities

The Humboldt University is a little more classical in their educational approaches than the very progressive UU experience in the first year of my studies. There were two lectures per week that did not require much participation from the side of the students. And the seminars were also mostly lead by the professor.

## counselling &amp; support at receiving university abroad

As noted already before, would've been nice to have an introduction for the specific academic organizational issues at the HU. That being said, the International Office at the Humboldt was very welcoming and forthcoming, helping with whatever problems I was encountering.

## transfer of credits

I can not yet comment on the transfer of credits as I am still in the course of writing the closing essays of two modules. I foresee the gain the Transcript of Records and Credits by the end of March/beginning of April.

**STUDENT LIFE**

## welcome &amp; orientation programme

There was a welcome brunch at the International Office - but on the first week of classes, so I could not ask the questions I was interested in when applying for courses - and actually had a seminar to attend at the exact time, arriving when the brunch was already over. Before I did however take an introduction to the Humboldt by their big international office. Which was nice in order to understand how the university systems, online services and the library function. But I could not address programme specific questions there!

## accommodation

I already had a place to live in Berlin upon arrival, so finding accommodation for me was not a problem at all. But I do know that finding a place in the city can be quite challenging and increasingly expensive. In this case I would suggest to start looking well in advance and to accept also short - term solutions.

## leisure &amp; culture

I fell in love with Berlin when I was 18 and am still heavily under the spell. It is a metropolis with all that it entails - museums, clubs, restaurants, cafes, etc - but at the same time with an incredibly relaxed atmosphere.

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## suggestions/tips

Most state museums are worth the visit but there is also a lot of history just walking around the streets of Berlin. The Berlin Underground tours are fun! Riding a bike is great! For nice café and restaurant recommendations check the webpage of [ceeceberlin](http://ceeceberlin.com)! Food Instagram - [berlinfoodstories](https://www.instagram.com/berlinfoodstories/)!

**CONCLUSIONS**

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

Absolutely - in the media apartment you get the chance to learn more about the German Media Archeology approach to media studies, so it is a little more technical than the highly theory based studies in Utrecht. But together they make a truly great mix!

do you have any additional advice or comments?

Make sure to ask the organizational questions to the programme coordinator/Erasmus office before the start of the semester - always better to ask everything rather than finding out things a bit late. Because, once contacted, the office is truly very forthcoming!

**Report 2**

faculty/college	Department of Media and Culture Studies
level	<input type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	Gender Studies (Research)

destination city & country	Berlin, Germany
how did you travel to your destination?	train
name university abroad	Humboldt Universität zu Berlin
start date	14 / 10 / 2019 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	16 / 02 / 2020 (dd/mm/yyyy)

**PREPARATION**

## exchange application process

The application process was simple and transparent. I was lucky because of the four schools that had partnerships with the Gender Studies program (my home program at Utrecht University), the course offer at Humboldt University fit well with my interests so it was easy to make a selection.

## counselling &amp; support at Utrecht University

I got helpful support from the Humanities international office at UU. They responded to my emails promptly and had a clear understanding of the application process and Erasmus+ requirements

## academic preparation

Before choosing my receiving institution, I had a brief look at the research being done by the departments relevant to my research interests. This meant that before I went I had pinpointed some specific researchers

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who I wanted to take classes with and had at least a cursory idea of their recent or current research so I knew what topics and issues I could reach out to them on.
language preparation
I didn't take a class because I am a native German speaker, but I was nervous about doing academic work in German because I had only ever worked in English. So, I made sure to do some more reading in German, both for fun and academic, before my departure.
finances
The Erasmus grant was helpful, although not enough to cover my monthly expenses while abroad. This did not matter too much since my living expenses were lower while in abroad than they are in Utrecht, and yet I think it's important to make an exchange experience truly accessible to ensure that all or at least most expenses can be covered by the grant. If not for everyone, than on a needs-based approach.

**STUDY ABROAD PERIOD**

study programme (content and organisational issues)
I ended up taking classes both in the partnered department (Gender Studies) and in another department (Philosophy). This meant I had to do some planning for myself, specifically organizing accreditation between programs at my receiving institution. However, I would recommend using the semester abroad to deepen existing research interests that can't be satisfied in the same way at your home institution, and the philosophy department offered content directly relevant to my work, so I would still recommend going the extra mile if possible to take full advantage of what the receiving institution has to offer.
academic quality of education activities
Teaching was more closely linked to the staff's ongoing research or area of expertise, which reflected in the quality of the learning experience. I had the impression that teachers were getting something out of the classes themselves and generally seemed enthusiastic about questions and challenges from students and took our interests seriously.
counselling & support at receiving university abroad
I was a little bit disappointed by the quality of the administrative support at my receiving institution. The German academic system is quite different from the Dutch, which in itself is not a problem, but it was generally assumed that the way things functioned at the receiving institution would be intuitive from an outside perspective, which was not the case. Specifically, regarding course selection and accreditation, a lot has to happen in person and on paper, which is manageable but does take some getting used to, particularly when you are new to a university and don't understand who to get in touch with for everything.
transfer of credits
As the semester in Germany goes until 31 March, I do not yet have my final grades and credits so cannot comment on this.

**STUDENT LIFE**

welcome & orientation programme
I skipped the orientation program.
accommodation
I stayed in non-student accommodation.



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leisure & culture
I was quite lucky and already knew some people in the city which made my transition a little bit easier and I also got along well with some classmates in a feminist theory class. Through this, I was introduced fairly easily into the city. I also joined two book clubs, so that I would not only have academic friends and enjoyed going to art museums and galleries.
suggestions/tips
Join clubs and groups with similar interests as yours. Even if you're there for only a short time, it will be easier to find likeminded people who can introduce you to the city.

<b>CONCLUSIONS</b>	
would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain	
Yes. It expanded my academic horizon in a way that I think will be indispensable for my thesis and I was able to grow personally as well.	
do you have any additional advice or comments?	
no.	

**2018-2019****Report 1**

faculty/college	Filosofie en Religiewetenschappen (and Gender Studies)
level	<input type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	Research Master Religious Studies

destination city & country	Berlin, Germany
name university abroad	Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin
start date	15 / 10 / 2018 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	15 / 02 / 2019 (dd/mm/yyyy)

<b>PREPARATION</b>	
exchange application process	
The application process was clear. The international office was very helpful in answering all my questions.	
counselling & support at Utrecht University	
I have had very clear and helpful contact with the International office. This made the application process quite easy, although it costs some time.	
academic preparation	
I wanted to study Gender Studies in Berlin but was not enrolled in the Gender Studies program in Utrecht. Therefore, I had to proof that I had enough knowledge in Gender Studies by emailing the contact person at the Humboldt. For some extra preparation, I took courses at the Gender Studies program in Utrecht.	

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language preparation
I started with improving my German language skills the semester before I went on exchange. The requirement was level C1. In the end I managed, but it took a lot of time and dedication. First, I did a lot of self study, after which I enrolled in a course at the Goethe Institut in Amsterdam. The month prior to my exchange semester, I took an intense language course of at the university
finances
It is much cheaper to live in Berlin than in Amsterdam or Utrecht, so I did not spend that much money.

**STUDY ABROAD PERIOD**

study programme (content and organisational issues)
I studied at the Gender Studies department of the Humboldt University. It was difficult to find my way through the courses at the website. I still find the website very confusing, you just need a lot of time and patience to find all the courses. The credit system works quite differently from the system at UU. To receive around 30 credits you would need 5-6 courses. The courses are structured in modules. Each module is about 12 credits ECT, and consists of two courses and an "abschlussprüfung", usually a big term paper or an oral exam.
academic quality of education activities
The academic quality at the gender studies department is high and challenging. I found the academic environment very stimulating and inspiring. The students are motivated and independent. Unlike at UU, the teachers treat the master students like adults, which means that it is completely your own responsibility to show up to classes and to do your work. I really liked this atmosphere, and most students worked hard from an intrinsic motivation and their own interests. Moreover, the class discussions were interesting and respectful and the department is generally very inclusive. All in all, I could say that I learned a lot during the semester and I felt very at home at the department.
counselling & support at receiving university abroad
Both before the semester started and after the semester ended, the gender studies erasmus students were invited for a meeting to discuss all practical issues. This was very helpful, since the credit point system and the bureaucracy at HU is incredibly confusing and old-fashioned. The coordinator was very helpful and patient, and she helped us with all our questions.
transfer of credits

**STUDENT LIFE**

welcome & orientation programme
There was an organisational meeting for erasmus students at the gender studies department. This meeting was very helpful for practical information, but it also granted the opportunity to meet the other exchange student. This was very welcome, all of us stayed in contact during the semester and some of us became close friends.
accommodation
I was very lucky and found a beautiful room through friends. However, Berlin is quite difficult in terms of accommodation and housing is becoming more expensive and scarce. If you want to avoid the Erasmus bubble, I would definitely recommend to find housing on your own, and not settle for university accommodation. You can find flatshares through facebook or websites like wg-gesucht.de.

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leisure & culture
Berlin is absolutely full of exciting things. There are so many nice bars, cheap food places, activities and parties. Especially in the summer, everybody is sitting outside on the streets, along the canal, or in one of the many beautiful parks. The winter months are a lot harder, when the days are short and grey and cold and people tend to stay inside much more. I tried to keep myself busy during these cold winter months by signing up for yoga lessons and dance sessions and I found a football team in my neighbourhood.
suggestions/tips
I think that everybody finds what they want to find in Berlin. For me, it was the perfect mix of night time strolls and flea markets and falafel. I can definitely recommend to leave the crowded city sometimes, and visit the surrounding lakes and the forest. These are only a short metro ride away!

**CONCLUSIONS**

would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain
I would definitely recommend Berlin as an exchange destination, and the Humboldt University in particular. Berlin is a great city to explore for a couple of months, and the university offers structure, social contacts and an inspiring academic environment.
do you have any additional advice or comments?

**2017-2018****Report 1**

e-mail address	<i>optional; only if you don't mind students preparing for study abroad contacting you directly</i> f.a.m.f.gomaa@students.uu.nl
faculty/college	Department of History
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	History

destination city & country	Berlin, Germany
name university abroad	Humboldt University
start date	01 / 04 / 2018 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	31 / 07 / 2018 (dd/mm/yyyy)

**PREPARATION**

exchange application process
The application was rather easy. After being selected by Utrecht's International Office, I received an email when and where I could apply. This was just a matter of filling out a couple of forms and taking a simple language test. This language test was to indicate whether or not one needed an extra language course that takes place one

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month before the start of the semester. After filling out the forms, I received an email telling me I would get a confirmation of my application within a couple of weeks. I received the confirmation in January, after which I got an email with my 'matriculation date' and more forms to fill out. The matriculation is very important. This is when you officially register at the HU, but you will only do so once you arrive in Berlin, and they help you with the process. The matriculation itself is mainly just filling out forms and gathering the necessary paperwork.
counselling & support at Utrecht University
At Utrecht University I didn't have a lot of counseling and support, but I didn't ask for it either. I think, if I had needed it, I could have just dropped by the International Office and they would have helped me. I only went to the Exchange orientation event organised by the International Office.
academic preparation
I prepared for my exchange with some German language courses. I met the requirements (German at B2-level) but I still needed to adapt to the language a lot in the first few weeks. Because of course, in a language course you don't learn how to debate academically in German. So this required some getting used to in the first few weeks, but I learned a lot with just listening and participating in class, so everything worked out. I did not do any other academic preparation.
language preparation
See the question above.
finances
I got an Erasmus scholarship, and I also got a DIA-Stipendium. I can highly recommend both! The Erasmus scholarship was easy to apply for, since there is a lot of guidance from the UU. (But still, it's a lot of paperwork!) The DIA-Stipendium was also very easy. I just gathered all of the necessary paperwork, and filled the forms out online. Apart from the scholarships, I had saved money for my time in Berlin. If you don't have these luxuries, I think there are also possibilities to get a studentjob in Berlin, I however don't have any experience with this, so I cannot advise you on this matter.

**STUDY ABROAD PERIOD**

study programme (content and organisational issues)
<p>The organisational issues of the study programme were quite intense. It all started with the fact that it is not usual at the HU (or maybe in Berlin/Germany in general) to give the same courses each year. In preparation for my exchange, I had my whole timetable figured out. But eventually, none of these courses were taking place (because I had based my timetable on the previous semesters).</p> <p>In January or so (for Winter Semester probably around July) the new Course Catalogue is published on AGNES. (This is kind of like OSIRIS at the UU). Here you can find all of your personal information, your grades, your courses et cetera.</p> <p>In the Course Catalogue, you have a lot of different types of courses. You have Vorlesungen (these are just lectures), Übungen (Exercises, these are relatively simple seminars, where you discuss one topic with a lot of primary resources), Seminars (Pro and Bachelor: Bachelor being the most difficult) in the Seminars you usually discuss one era or one very specific topic. I took an Übung and three Seminars. If you want to know more about the exact differences between all of the courses, feel free to contact me or look it up in the Course Catalogue.</p> <p>If you have found which courses you want to take this Semester, you can apply for the courses during a given time (usually a couple of weeks before the Semester starts - note: you have to be matriculated before you can register for courses!) A lot of the time, you won't get into the courses, because there are more students who want to take the course than there are spots available. It's important to go to the first seminar, (even if you did not get in!) because usually there are possibilities to take the course anyway. For example, in my case, I initially</p>

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didn't get in in three of the four courses that I wanted to take! But eventually I was able to take all of the courses I wanted.

Content wise, the study programme was quite diverse. The main topic (in my case) is of course German history, but they also have a lot about East-European and Russian History. If this is not your cup of tea, they also usually have a couple of courses on American History, the nineteenth century and Ancient Rome and Greece. But it should be noted that the focus is on modern German and East-European/Russian History.

**academic quality of education activities**

The academic quality of all of the courses was pretty high. Similar to Utrecht's standards. It was especially difficult in the beginning, because I still had to adapt to the German language in class (I took all courses in German, since they only have a handful of courses in English, and all the spots are usually almost immediately filled). But the teachers really relate to the international students, so usually they go easy on you. But an active mindset and attitude is expected during class, the teachers expect you to participate in the discussion.

**counselling & support at receiving university abroad**

There is not a lot of counseling. My official Erasmus-coordinator had a very busy schedule, and had no time whatsoever to assist students with their timetables. However, her assistant was very kind to help everyone who needed it. Other than that, you have the basic support services that are also available at the UU, for example the 'Studenten Service' and you could always contact the International Office in Berlin if you need help with anything.

**transfer of credits**

While I am writing this, I have not yet handed in my Berlin Transcript of Records to the UU, so I do not know how they will transfer my credits. However, I can say something about the manner in which I obtained my Transcript of Records. In Berlin, they work with 'Modulbogen'. This is a piece of paper which has the courses you took and the grades you got written on them. The teachers are supposed to sign this and give you a stamp at the end of the Semester. Once you have all of your modulbogen, you can go to your Erasmus-coordinator (in my case, her assistant) and they will create your Transcript of Records. As an international student, it's very important to get all of your grades back before the Vorlesungszeit (the period in which you actually have classes) ends! Most of the teachers go on holiday during the summer and you won't be able to reach them before the next semester starts! (Usually end of September/October) So make sure you have everything you need (grades/signatures/stamps/modulbogen) BEFORE you leave Berlin.

**STUDENT LIFE****welcome & orientation programme**

There is an International Club called 'Orbis' at the Humboldt University in Berlin (similar to ESN in other cities). They had an extensive programme full of activities. They were especially active early in the Semester, so you could go to their events and meet new friends. They also organised drinks (borrels) at their local bar, which was also a nice and informal way to meet new people. Some of the activities they organised were: an Orientation Event (to welcome you to Berlin) and a Campus Tour (to get to know your way around the university), a University Library Tour (so you know where to get your literature and how to find sources), trips to museums, a trip to Dresden, a boattrip on the Spree river etc. So there are a lot of activities to choose from!

**accommodation**

For a lot of people, it's very hard to find accommodation in Berlin. The university has a few campuses (Adlershof, Allee der Kosmonauten, Sonnenallee) with studenthousing, but this is very limited. It is fairly cheap (I think around 300€ a month), but it is also VERY far away (ca. one hour with public transportation) from the city centre, where you will most likely have all of your classes (if you study History like me, or a different Humanities programme). I can recommend HousingAnywhere.com, this is where I found my room. It's a very

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easy way to find accommodation. You also have wg-gesucht.de (it's like the Dutch kamernet.nl) where you can also find a lot of rooms available! Thirdly, you have private renting options, like medici-living.de - I have no experience with them myself, but I have heard positive stories about them as well. But bear in mind that with private renting rooms you will have to pay a bit more money for a room than most students can afford. Overall, prices in Berlin are way higher than Utrecht. Don't expect to get a nice room in Prenzlauer Berg for €350,- ;) I think the average for a room in Berlin is around €450/500 a month.

## leisure &amp; culture

There is A LOT to do in Berlin in your leisure time! Apart from the activities from Orbis, you have several other clubs and organisations where you can participate, but you can also discover Berlin with some friends or on your own. There are countless museums, parks, bars, and a lot of other fun activities to do! Berlin has a rich culture, so you will never be bored!

## suggestions/tips

I suggest to go to the first couple of Orbis activities, because it's a great way to meet friends! Some of their activities may sound a bit geeky (like an Ampelmann cup) but trust me, you will have a blast! I can also recommend to take trips outside of Berlin, for example a trip to the Ostsee, Potsdam or Leipzig!

**CONCLUSIONS**

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

Yes! Berlin is a great city! It has such a relaxed vibe, everyone is very kind and easygoing. University wise, I would also recommend the HU. They have a very welcoming environment and the education is of very high quality. However, it is a university where you have to do a lot on your own. Nothing will happen automatically, you really have to do everything yourself if you want to get things done. So arrive with that mindset, otherwise you will be taken over by events.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

If you have to write papers in order for the UU to recognize your courses: start early! As soon as possible! I heard about this in May, so I did not have a lot of time. But I strongly suggest you start very early. Because if you take three or four Seminars, you have to write three or four papers. All of the German students write their papers during the Summer holiday, and hand it in before the new Semester starts, but this is not an option for Erasmus students (as far as I know). If you hand in the papers after the Vorlesungszeit (the duration of the semester, when you actually have classes, in my case at the end of July) you will not receive a grade until October! The teachers are not available during the Summer holidays, so make sure you hand in your papers at least a month before the semester ends, because the teachers need a lot of time to grade it (and you have to keep annoying them asking them for your grades, otherwise they will just forget to grade them.) When you get your grades back before the end of the Vorlesungszeit, you can contact the Erasmuscoordinator to get your Transcript of Records. You also should not expect a lot of counseling from your teachers concerning your paper. You should discuss your topic and ideas with them, but eventually you're on your own to write it. It's your responsibility to hand everything in on time.

Also: Don't forget to enjoy your time in Berlin! And if you have any questions: please contact me! I will be happy to answer any questions you may have. Especially in the beginning, I did not understand anything about the education system, AGNES, Moodle, Matriculation, et cetera, so if you're a bit lost, don't worry, everything will become clear in the end! :-)

**2016 – 2017****Report 1**

faculty/college

Humanities

**Germany – Berlin - Humboldt Universität zu Berlin**

level	<input type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	RMA Musicology

destination city & country	Berlin, Germany
name university abroad	Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin
start date	29 / 09 / 2016 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	28 / 02 / 2017 (dd/mm/yyyy)

**PREPARATION**

## exchange application process

My first preparations started with looking at which Universities abroad the UU had contacts with and then take a looking at which countries I wanted like to visit, which city and which university. I was looking for a receiving university that would offer me something that the UU did not, as this would make the exchange more usefull and legitimate. My choice fell on the Humboldt University in Berlin and I contacted a professor there with whom I wanted to study to introduce myself and ask whether it would be possible to come, what they had to offer and which things I should take into account. Fortunately I was very welcome and got a lot of advice regarding my stury programme there. After approval of my mentor I applied for the spot. During the preparation process it was very usefull for me to prepare a document where I could keep track of all requirements and deadlines.

## counselling &amp; support at Utrecht University

All information and documents were very clearly provided by the UU. The preparation meeting was usefull, though mostly focussed on Bachelors going abroad for the first time. The International Office was very helpful and quick in answering questions and requests.

## academic preparation

After my acceptance for the spot I started workin on a research proposal, as a large part of my stay in Berlin would lead up to writing my masters thesis upon coming back. I chose the courses that were offered so that they would fit my schedule, fill gaps in my education and be a usefull addition to my independent research.

## language preparation

As I was raised bilingual Dutch-German, I did not need much preparation for being able to speak German on an acceptable level.

## finances

As I had to give up my job and was not longer entitled to 'studiefinanciering' when going abroad, it was very convenient to be able to apply for the Erasmus+ grant. Additionaly I applied for a scholarship from the Duitsland Instituut Amsterdam and I counted on using some of my savings to finance this semester in Berlin. The housing market is very difficult and expensice, but fortunately I found an affordable place to stay. The living costs in Berlin are comparable to the Netherlands, but there were quite some extra expenses connected to the move and finding my way in this new city.

**STUDY ABROAD PERIOD**

## study programme (content and organisational issues)

When arriving at the Humboldt University it became clear that I had to revise my study plan somewhat. The ECTS-system works different here and not all things were clearly defined before the semester started. But the

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Erasmus team was very helpful and I was able to do the largest part of what I had planned. The courses were very interesting and offered me a lot of new and interesting perspectives on music and musicology. I was counselled very well in my own research and got a lot of interest and advice from many staffmembers and fellow students, which was very helpful.
academic quality of education activities
The courses I took were quite challenging and did certainly live up to the level I was used to in Utrecht. The lecturers expect a lot of personal engagement and input from you - certainly in the seminars.
counselling & support at receiving university abroad
Both the Erasmus team as all lecturers were very friendly and willing to help and advise.
transfer of credits
Not applicable yet.

**STUDENT LIFE**

welcome & orientation programme
There were some introduction meetings and activities in which more information about practical matters was provided and you could get to know the other Erasmus students. This was very useful and well organised.
accommodation
the housing market is very difficult and expensive, but fortunately I found an affordable place to stay. The living costs in Berlin are comparable to the Netherlands, but there were quite some extra expenses connected to the move and finding my way in this new city.
leisure & culture
Berlin is a city with endless possibilities - almost too much to comprehend. I had made a list of what things I wanted to do, see and experience, this helped to relieve the overwhelming pressure to want to do everything. I also joined the orchestra of the university which whom I gave concerts in Berlin and Prague, a very nice experience.
suggestions/tips
When living in Berlin it is very nice to have a bike. Though the distances can be long, it is a great way to explore and to get to know the city.

**CONCLUSIONS**

would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain
Absolutely. It is a great city and a very good university with lots of possibilities and very friendly and open people.
do you have any additional advice or comments?
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