

Report 1

faculty/college	Humanities
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	Politics, Philosophy, Economics (PPE)

destination city & country	Rome, Italy
how did you travel to your destination?	Bus
name university abroad	LuiSS University
start date	01 / 09 / 2021 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	07 / 02 / 2022 (dd/mm/yyyy)

PREPARATION

exchange application process

As LUISS University has a structured partnership with the PPE program in Utrecht, the application process was straight forward and well guided. The description of the destination and the instructions for the application process was helpful and, therefore, despite the necessary bureaucracy it was not very difficult to apply.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

Usually, the International Office responded to my emails in very few days and sometimes even on the same day. Unfortunately, due to Covid no specific office hours were provided but that was not a big problem as their responses by email were helpful.

academic preparation

Academically speaking, the PPE program prepared me more than well for my courses abroad. In PPE I have learned how to work independently and in groups, how to do research and write essays and got an overview the disciplines that I am studying. Therefore, PPE provided me with a good academic background so that my courses at LUISS university seemed to be rather easy and far less time intensive.

language preparation

All my courses at LUISS university were taught in English. As my study program is fully taught in English, I was not confronted with any problems in terms of communication and the understanding of the teaching material. I did not take any Italian classes prior to my departure but I did some online Italian language practices during my stay abroad. Furthermore, most of the essential phrases in Italian I learned learning-by-doing as most people in Rome do not speak English.

finances

My expenditure in Rome were similar to the ones that I have in Utrecht. The housing prices differ significantly in Rome, depending on the location, size and how lucky you get to make a good deal. Moreover, most of the time I was very busy exploring the city or being in Uni so that I had very little time and energy to cook frequently. The restaurant and bar prices are really low compared to the Netherlands. This is why I ate in restaurants/ streetfood most of the time so that, overall, I had roughly the costs as in Utrecht. However, the financial grant that is included in Erasmus plus enabled me to cover most of the costs without using my personal savings.

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STUDY ABROAD PERIOD	
study programme (content and organisational issues)	LUISS University uses many online platforms and applications and to get information and attend classes was very confusing in the beginning. The professors and university staff was friendly but their English skills were often quite limited. As the university does not have universal time slots, it was very difficult to choose courses of interest that do not overlap. Therefore, I was forced to take courses that I was not that interested in, which was unfortunate as the overlap was only partially.
academic quality of education activities	Even though LUISS university is considered as one of the best and most prestigious universities in Italy, the quality of education is significantly lower than in Utrecht. More course load is higher and they have more lecture/ seminar time than at Utrecht University. However, the classes are barely interactive and all the discussed content can be found on the uploaded slides. The covered topics were interesting and relevant but quite often not sufficiently in depth. Most of the material in my courses in political science was presented as given facts and was not up to discussion, which I found a bit frustrating sometimes.
counselling & support at receiving university abroad	I did not have any severe issues that required support and, therefore, I am not able to provide a precise answer to this question. However, the majority of the non-teaching staff is not fluent in English, which makes the communication quite difficult. Furthermore, it was not clearly stated how to find and choose courses and where to find advice. Most of the explanation and support we received was provided by ESN LUISS rather than by the university itself.
transfer of credits	Italy has a similar credit system. However, it is unfortunate that our grade do not count for our GPA in the Netherlands.

STUDENT LIFE	
welcome & orientation programme	Unfortunately, there was not in-person orientation programme for international students but only for Italians. We did have an online introduction. However, they only provided information that we had already received before, so it was not very helpful. All social welcome activities were organized by ESN LUISS and they did an amazing job. They organized a full week with daily activities including city tours, sports activities, dinners and parties. However, only international students and a few Italian ESN members participated in these events so that it was very difficult to get to know Italians.
accommodation	Due to Covid, Utrecht University confirmed my exchange semester in Rome only 1 month before departure, which made it very difficult and stressful to find housing as most of the apartments located close to uni were already rented out to other students. I managed to get a room in time but moved to a different place after one month which was more expensive than expected but with a better location.
leisure & culture	It was a very enriching cultural experience and I tried to get to see as much as possible of Rome and Italy in general. However, the unreliable public transport system makes getting around very difficult (sometimes even impossible, especially at night).

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We had a lot of classes and in the beginning I spent a lot of time attending them. After a while I figured out which of the classes are actually important to follow and for which ones I can study by only looking at the uploaded PowerPoints, so that I had way more free time to spend in the city.

Unfortunately, I could not find sports clubs. Most of the activities in Rome are connected to eating and drinking so that my friends and I often explored different restaurants, bars and cafes around the entire city.

suggestions/tips

I strongly suggest becoming a ESN member and participating in their events because that is the best way to meet new people.

Furthermore, it is worth to travel to small cities around Rome or to go to the beach sometimes. Rome is a big city and can be very tiring after a while, so I always found it refreshing to leave it for a few days.

CONCLUSIONS

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

I recommend LUISS Univeristy as a destination to study abroad. Rome is an amazing and fun city and there are a lot of places and events to visit. LUISS is a good university but there are very limited options for extracurricular activities and therefore the engagement with the uni in general is quite low.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

More clarity and guidance at Luiss university in the first few days, more acitivities with the Italian students to get access to their "student bubble".

In the structured PPE partnership we were only allowed to take political science courses. However, I would have preferred to take some courses in Economics and it would be great if this would be offered to students in the future.

Report 2

faculty/college	Humanities
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	Philosophy, Politics and Economics

destination city & country	Rome, Italy
how did you travel to your destination?	Train
name university abroad	LUISS Guido Carli
start date	08 / 09 / 2021 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	18 / 01 / 2022 (dd/mm/yyyy)

PREPARATION

exchange application process

The application went smoothly and I always knew whom to ask in case of any questions. Of course, the pandemic caused some uncertainty, but I hope it will be less problematic for the students in the next semesters.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

Utrecht University and the International Office
academic preparation
provided great support.
language preparation
Since both my studies at the UU and LUISS are fully in English, I didn't experience any language barriers on an academic level. Before arriving, I used Babbel to learn some Italian and attended a private two-weeks course at RomalT (a private language school) before the beginning of the semester.
finances
Life in Italy is cheaper in the Netherlands. Especially eating out and cultural events are less expensive. The Erasmus grant is a great support to finance your stay!

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD
study programme (content and organisational issues)
I followed the Philosophy, Politics and Economics Program at LUISS and chose two extra subjects. In total I obtained 36 credits during one semester.
academic quality of education activities
LUISS is one of the best universities in Italy. However, compared to the Dutch system, it was relatively easy to obtain high grades without doing too much effort. Compared to other Italian universities the programs were small-scale and interactive. Still, from a Dutch perspective, this is more or less normal. I definitely enjoyed my stay at LUISS, but it also made me appreciate the Dutch education system even more.
counselling & support at receiving university abroad
The support at LUISS is a big plus! There you can really see that it is a private university and student-oriented. I never encountered any serious organizational issues.
transfer of credits
I am still in the process of transferring the credits, but so far it seems to go smoothly.

STUDENT LIFE
welcome & orientation programme
ENS LUISS organized a very fun welcome week which gave a lot of opportunities to meet people and make friends. They kept organizing events throughout the semester and were incredibly motivated.
accommodation
Housing prices are more or less comparable to Utrecht. I had a lot of luck with finding a room, but generally I would recommend the LUISS housing support.
leisure & culture
I could make it short and just say: GO TO ROME!!! I could write a whole book on how much I fell in love with the city. I never got tired of exploring it and especially for people with a historical/cultural interest it is the best place to be. I am so grateful that I had the chance to spend so much time in the city and would certainly do it again.
suggestions/tips

My favourit tip is to explore the neighborhoods Monti and Testaccio.

CONCLUSIONS

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

Yes certainly!!! I personally enjoy the academic side more at the UU, but afterall an Erasmus semester is also not only about studying. LUISS has still a relatively high level of education and interesting professors who work in the field. I will never forget living in Rome and the people I met.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

Never stop to explore the city further - even five months are not actually enough ;)

Report 3

faculty/college	Humanities
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	Politics, Philosophy, Economics (PPE)

destination city & country	Rome, Italy
how did you travel to your destination?	Flight
name university abroad	Luiss University
start date	13 / 09 / 2021 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	07 / 02 / 2022 (dd/mm/yyyy)

PREPARATION

exchange application process

in progress

counselling & support at Utrecht University

did not utilize counselling as there was no need for it in my case

academic preparation

did the assigned readings in preparation for the specific classes

language preparation

privately did some online Italian language practices, however I did not have time next to my classes to take part in the university's language program

finances

my parents have the financial burden, next to the Erasmus grant

Italy – Rome LUISS Guido Carli

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD
study programme (content and organisational issues)
No complaints in terms of the communication of Professors, however the initial period was very difficult due to the chaotic organisation. When choosing courses we had limited guidance and oversight on the content of the electives. Moreover, initially I was confused about the platforms where vital course information, syllabuses and grades are provided for students.
academic quality of education activities
High quality of education. More course load than at Utrecht University, however easier examinations
counselling & support at receiving university abroad
no major issue arose in that area
transfer of credits
similar credit system

STUDENT LIFE
welcome & orientation programme
very helpful and welcoming
accommodation
had some issues with finding quality accomodation, however made it work in the second month
leisure & culture
the most amazing cultural experience
suggestions/tips
I strongly suggest becoming a ESN member and participating in their events

CONCLUSIONS
would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain
I highly recommend Luiss University, as well as Rome in general for all students looking for an amazing cultural experience
do you have any additional advice or comments?
more clarity and guidance at Luiss university in the first few days