

2022-2023
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: l.h.brull@students.uu.nl my weblog <input type="checkbox"/> yes: my Facebook account <input type="checkbox"/> yes: other (social) media <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: Lars Brull (LinkedIn) or <input type="checkbox"/> my contact details cannot be published on the UU webpage, but I do give the International Office permission to forward my e-mail address to individual students interested in my host university abroad: @	
faculty/college	Humanities	
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD	
name study programme	History (Dutch track)	

destination city & country	Madrid, Spain
how did you travel to your destination?	Plane
name university abroad	Universidad Autonoma Madrid (UAM)
start date	30 / 01 / 2023 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	05 / 06 / 2023 (dd/mm/yyyy)

You are requested to write on the following topics. Text boxes will expand automatically while typing!

PREPARATION
exchange application process The application procedure wasn't too difficult to complete. Finding everything on UAM's website, however, so I could see which courses they offered was my biggest challenge. However, in the end, I realized how the UAM website functioned, and I experienced no troubles with the application process.
counselling & support at Utrecht University The help and counseling provided by Utrecht was excellent. They would answer any questions I had within a week.
academic preparation Since I took courses in international relations in Utrecht and Madrid, I did not need to prepare myself academically. Therefore, I was already familiar with the theories that we discussed in the classroom.
language preparation Since all of my courses (in the field of international relations) were taught in English, I didn't need to achieve a specific language level. I did, however, take some Spanish classes at the UU (español 1 and español 2) as well as some classes at the Babel Language School in Utrecht. I received an A2 thanks to my Spanish classes at Babel and the UU. Although I didn't need it for my courses, this was the only language preparation I did before traveling to Spain.
finances

Spain – Universidad Autónoma de Madrid

Before I left the Netherlands, I saved some money that I earned from an internship. Additionally, my parents gave me some money as well. I also applied for an Erasmus grant and got some money from that as well. Furthermore, since I didn't use my OV card, I also received funding from the DUO. Please be aware that I noticed a very small interest rate when I received payment from DUO. At the moment, the monthly payment is about 120 euros, and the interest is charged at a rate of about 1-2 euros each month.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)

In total, I followed five subjects. I followed a class about human rights, the legacy of the ancient world in international relations, the United States as a global power, and the birth of the modern world. I also took a Spanish language course to improve my Spanish. In the beginning, I did not know how to officially enroll in courses, but since I was an incoming student, the university gave me one week to experience the class before I could officially enroll. This confused me a lot at first since it works differently in Utrecht.

academic quality of education activities

The academic standard is not quite as high as at the UU. Compared to the UU, the workload was higher. However, compared to the papers and essays you must write at the UU, these papers and essays require less analytical thinking. However, I also picked up a lot of new theories and information that are useful to my field of study. Additionally, participating in class is valued and may have an impact on your grade (either positively or negatively). To earn a better mark in the end, my advice is to actively participate in class and try to be seen.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

It varies. It could take a month for my exchange university to respond before I arrived in Madrid. Once I arrived in Madrid, though, they responded to me considerably more quickly (within a week, roughly).

transfer of credits

A few weeks following my last exam, I received an email with my transfer of credits.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

In February, a welcoming event was held. The welcoming event contained a lunch, a tour of the campus, and an introductory presentation. The welcome program assisted me in making new connections. Additionally, it is a useful way to get to know the university.

accommodation

When it comes to housing in Madrid, there are many choices. You can look for accommodations on the UAM website. However, UAM is far from the city center and has expensive housing. Therefore, in my opinion, it is not worthwhile. Other choices include Spotahome, Alun.net, Uniplaces, Idealista, and Atmosphere Living. But I decided to book a room at HelpHousing Madrid (also known as HelpHousing). I picked Helphousing because it is a business. There is a chance that you could get scammed if you look for a room on a website where you can contact the landlord directly. That is less likely to happen in the case of a business. The drawback, in my experience, is that businesses typically ask for higher rent than landlords. Due to an error in the booking, I paid the first two months of rent while I was not in Spain yet. Furthermore, Helphousing charges an administration fee. However, unlike other websites, Helphousing also permits visitors to stay at your residence. That is a great thing about Helphousing.

Spain – Universidad Autónoma de Madrid

I stayed in the Salamanca neighborhood of Madrid. It's a beautiful area to live in, and at night it is peaceful. Take caution when you visit a neighboring supermarket because Salamanca is considered Madrid's priciest area, so watch out for higher prices in supermarkets. Sometimes walking to a supermarket that is a little further away can be financially beneficial. Finally, I should mention that I had seven wonderful roommates who were from different countries, including Australia, Peru, Italy, Guatemala, Mexico, and Chile. We occasionally ate dinner together or enjoyed pleasant conversations in the general areas of the house.

leisure & culture

Spain has a wonderful culture with a wide variety of foods, music, and festivities. It can be interesting to see how the celebrations vary from regional to national.

suggestions/tips

There are a few recommendations I'd like to make.

1) Make an effort to travel while you are in Spain. I advise visiting San Lorenzo El Escorial, a town in the hills with a sizable monastery/castle that belonged to Philip II. If you have a personal transit card with a youth discount, you won't have to pay extra to travel to a town that is nearby. Other towns/cities such as Valencia, Mallorca, Toledo and Segovia are highly recommendable to visit. Please keep in mind that train tickets might be pricey if you travel a little farther such as to Valencia.

2) Be aware that the metro closes late at night. You can also get home using night buses, cabs, or Uber. A party often begins around 23:00 to 0:00 and ends between 4:00 and 8:00 in the morning.

3) Try some Spanish drinks besides Sangria. There are two types of drinks that the Spanish like to drink such as Tinto de Verano (can be bought in bars and supermarket) and Calimocho (Cheap red wine + Coca cola)..

4) Try other types of food (other than churros, paella, and tapas). These include tarta de Mazapan (typical of Toledo), Bocadillo de Calamares (typical of Madrid), Turrón (typical of southern Europe), and Ponche Segoviano (typical of Segovia). Additionally, make an effort to dine at Latin American establishments (Peruvian and Venezuelan restaurants are highly recommended), as Spain has more Latin American restaurants than the Netherlands.

5) There are some wonderful pubs, cafés, or restaurants in Madrid, such as café ajenjo (50s vibe but you can only pay in cash), La arepera (Venezualan restaurant), Taberna Balkanika (Balkan restaurant), Grosso Napoletano (Italian restaurant), La Barraca (Valencian restaurant), San Gínes (churros café), Tierra Burrito Bar, La Maragata (Best and cheap sandwiches in Madrid), Oakberry (dessert), Ilaollao (yoghurt ice), el tigre bar (tapas), Via Lactea (bar), Sala equis (cinema bar).

6) Malasaña or Chueca are good neighborhoods to go out or enjoy a drink with friends.

7) Participate in the (local) celebrations that are held in Madrid or Spain. I went to Valencia's Las Fallas in March. San Isidro and Dos de Mayo were among the celebrations that took place in Madrid. I also experienced the celebration of Holy Week that takes place throughout Spain.

CONCLUSIONS

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

I would recommend this university since the atmosphere on campus is quite dynamic. They occasionally arrange events (particularly in the summer after classes have ended). I also recommend seeing Madrid. It is a vibrant city with a diverse cultural scene. Furthermore, the parties in Madrid are fantastic. The city never sleeps since some stores are open 24 hours a day, buses run constantly, and festivities end between 4-6 a.m. Madrid also has a number of museums and architectural buildings to offer.

Spain – Universidad Autónoma de Madrid

do you have any additional advice or comments?

I have a few suggestions for you before you travel to Spain.

1) Because not everyone speaks English, I strongly advise you to learn Spanish to navigate around (for example, in bars, restaurants, taxis, public transportation, talking to locals, hospitals, and so on). My level was A2, which was sufficient to 'survive' Madrid. As a result, I propose taking Spanish classes at the UU (which can earn you some extra ECTS), Babel (which can give you a discount if you sign up with your UU email), and/or UAM (the university offers additional Spanish classes ranging from A1 to C1).

2) Make an effort to join an organization. I joined the Erasmus Student Network (ESN), which planned many enjoyable activities such as parties, drinks, trips, and so on. If you want to meet new people, I recommend it. The association also provides you with a discount card.

3) I recommend the Citylife Madrid website. This website will assist you in settling in Madrid and obtaining a transport card. They also sell a discount card and have whatsapp groups for young people to meet each other.

4) Obtain your personal transportation card. If you are under the age of 26, you can travel across Madrid for only 8 euros per month. See the Citylife Madrid website in order to know how to get the personal transport card.

5) Have fun as an Erasmus student!

Report 2

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

destination city & country	Madrid, Spain
how did you travel to your destination?	Plane
name university abroad	UAM
start date	01 / 08 / 2022 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	31 / 01 / 2023 (dd/mm/yyyy)

PREPARATION

exchange application process

I found it a bit of a hassle to sift through all the options on the website. Especially since many of the Spanish universities don't have many English courses. However, once you've found your way on the website it's not super difficult. I found the application process on the UU side not difficult either.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

I really liked the pre-departure meeting, I met some people who were also going to Madrid which was fun. I don't understand why they do it by faculty though, if they did for example all UU students going to Spain you can meet a lot more people which i would have preferred. the presentation itself was mostly about culture shock which i didn't really have a problem with.

Spain – Universidad Autónoma de Madrid

academic preparation
the academic level in Spain is definitely lower so there's no need for any preparation.
language preparation
I did one semester of Spanish at UU so it was nice to have the basics but I didn't take any classes in Spanish. People don't generally speak english in the city though so it is nice to have a bit of a foundation in Spanish.
finances
I did save up so I could enjoy my time and make some trips but Madrid is cheaper to live in than NL

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)
I like the courses, however the teachers' English was not good. mostly directly translated. the exchange office was also overwhelmed by students so administration and communication aren't very smooth but in the end people are willing to help and it all turned out okay. The academic level is also lower so that kind of balances out the bad English of some of the teachers.
academic quality of education activities
Level is lower than NL.
counselling & support at receiving university abroad
Like i said they were very busy but willing and able to help once you've reached them.
transfer of credits
haven't done this yet so can't say

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme
there's a welcome day which is very nice and i visited the campus before classes started so i could know where to go.
accommodation
I lived in the city centre which was great! many other exchange students. the campus of UAM is about 30 mins train from the city centre but a metro + train card is only 10 euros a month so that was fine.
leisure & culture
Spain is the best! Madrid is such a fun city to live in and there's a lot to do.
suggestions/tips
make trips! we went to Lisbon for example.

CONCLUSIONS

would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain
definitely recommend! Madrid is super fun and getting around and making friends is very easy.

do you have any additional advice or comments?
n/a

2019-2020

Report 1

faculty/college	Humanities
level	Bachelor's
name study programme	History

destination city & country	Madrid, Spain
how did you travel to and from your destination?	Airplane
name university abroad	Universidad Autónoma de Madrid (UAM)
start date	28 /01/2020 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	29 /06/2020 (dd/mm/yyyy)

PREPARATION
exchange application process
The application process was rather stressful as courses turned out to be unavailable. However, once I arrived at UAM I realized I was not the only student struggling with their courses and luckily, I was able to get into the courses I originally wanted to apply to.
counselling & support at Utrecht University
Though information that was given to me helped me pick a university abroad, making sure my Learning Agreement was finalized took quite some time. Though my courses eventually fit my curriculum, I was confused with which courses I could pick. I believed abroad, just like a minor, would allow me to pick courses outside my bachelor's programme but later learned that they had to fit my program instead.
academic preparation
There was no need for academic preparation.
language preparation
Although I studied in Spain, it was not necessary to learn Spanish given that my courses were all taught in English. I did end up following a Spanish course (not at the university) because I wanted to learn the language, but not because the university required me to do so.

finances

My room was located in the Malasana neighborhood in Madrid. Though this neighborhood was amazing to stay in, it was also quite expensive. I paid around 500 euros for my room each month. Living in Spain is rather cheap, so grocery costs were similar or often cheaper than in the Netherlands. The public transport is much cheaper than in the Netherlands. With a card I got at the beginning of my exchange, I paid 20 euros a month for unlimited public transport in Madrid (this includes the bus, metro, and train).

(interrupted) STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

welcome & orientation programme

Though I arrived a day after the welcome day, there was an orientation programme. This programme however was fully conducted in Spanish so I did not really know what was going on. This was no problem however as I did meet fellow students who spoke English and the faculty at UAM helped me and other exchange students out.

study programme (content and organisational issues)

As I mentioned earlier, I initially was not able to enroll in the courses I had planned to enroll in. Therefore, I had to enroll in courses that were not very high in my list. Once arrived at UAM however, I was able to change these courses and I ended up following all the classes I initially wanted to follow. The courses I followed were great. I thoroughly enjoyed two courses taught by a professor from Cuba who provided new insights on international conflicts. Moreover, I followed a course on ancient history and its links to international relations. This course was amazing too and our class was very small, which improved the quality of education.

academic quality of education activities

As mentioned above, the quality of education was great. My professors were excellent and enthusiastic about the students and their curriculum. They encouraged discussions and gave us a wide variety of tasks.

transfer of credits

I have not yet received my transcript of records.

CORONAVIRUS CONSEQUENCES

support guidance of host university

As the coronavirus unfortunately hit Spain very early on in the crisis, UAM was quick to move classes online. I think this also had to do with my professors who kept in contact via email and made sure we were on schedule. Moreover, the Spanish are not as stressed about changes during the semester as Dutch people would be, so while I was initially worried, my professors extended deadlines and helped each student as much as they could.

support guidance of home university

Spain – Universidad Autónoma de Madrid

As mentioned above, the coronavirus hit Spain very early on. Therefore, I was the one to reach out to UU initially, because I had not received information about whether I had to return to the Netherlands or not while many exchange students in Madrid had already left Spain. Once I had reached out, the UU helped me to figure out what to do.

online offer and quality of digital courses

The online courses worked out well. For some classes I had zoom meetings while for others I did not have any, but this was not a problem. I had weekly assignments that kept me busy and the professors always provided extensive feedback.

suggestions/tips on digital exchange

Communication and clarity. I received many many emails from UAM in the beginning stages which were sometimes difficult to get through and were quite confusing. So I would say, stick to a limited amount of emails with clear guidelines.

CONCLUSIONS

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

I would definitely recommend UAM and Madrid to other students. I would have loved to have finished the semester in Madrid. My classes were great, I stayed in a very small but great apartment with other international students (via www.aluni.net), and overall the city is amazing. Besides the fact that there is much to see and to do, I loved the overall atmosphere of Madrid. Life happens outside which means there are always people out for coffee and drinks. My classes all took place between 09.00-14.00 (this was my longest day), which meant I could spend the rest of the day in the city with friends. During the first two months of the semester I had relatively little work to do, which meant everyone had loads of free time to explore the city. Though UAM is not located in the center of the city, I commuted everyday with the train like many other students which took me to the university in 20 minutes. Students at UAM are socially concerned, meaning that there are loads of student initiatives.

If you go to UAM, you have to accept that enrollment and deadlines are fluid. This initially stressed me out because it often means things don't work out on the first try, but once you accept that and recognize that things will always work themselves out, you will have a great time. The staff of my faculty (Philosophy and Arts) was very helpful and they fixed all the initial issues.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

Nope, that was it.