



UU Study Abroad Report Form

Contact info at the IO.

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

destination city & country	Iasi, Romania
how did you travel to your destination?	By plane
name university abroad	Alexandru Ioan Cuza (UAIC)
start date	03 / 02 / 23 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	20 / 06 / 23 (dd/mm/yyyy)

PREPARATION

exchange application process

I was happy to experience that this was not very complicated and that the UU communicated the steps very clearly. Obviously I was nervous to see whether I'd get accepted and there were no students available to tell me about their previous experiences in Iasi, which I was also nervous about, but this was not a problem in the end.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

I think Utrecht University has a good system for preparing and supporting students who are going abroad, such as asking Erasmus+ students from previous years to share their experiences. I think this is very important. For me this was not the case because nobody had been to Romania lately, but I still think it's a good concept. Also the information about the steps we should undertake before departure was very clear.

academic preparation

I am not quite sure what this means, but I don't think I was very academically prepared? I followed courses that were definitely outside of my regular study programme, but the level of the courses was not a problem at all.

language preparation

I thought I was very well prepared in English, but it turned out that a lot of courses that are said to be in English, were actually in Romanian. Although I do speak some Romanian, it proved to be a struggle. The level of English was not a problem at all however, so I was well prepared I think.



finances

I was not prepared for how much cheaper life would be in Romania, so it was a pleasant surprise. The grant was not enough to cover all of my expenses, but I work a remote job that I could continue there and I still got the loan from DUO.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)

This went well, even though (as I said before) I had to make quite a few changes because some courses were not taught in English as promised. It was also very difficult to follow courses from different faculties and every faculty had a very different organisation, so decided to stick with just one faculty.

academic quality of education activities

I assume this is about the quality of the courses. To be completely honest, nobody could have prepared me for how easy and informal the education was. I have never gotten an A in my life, so I was quite happy to get four 10's and a 9 on my list. This does, however, indicate the quality of the education, I think. I mean no disrespect towards UAIC or Romania as a whole, but I do think the standards at UU are a bit higher and it's far more difficult to pass the courses here.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

I haven't seen much of it, but I also didn't really need it. The university internally (like the professors) is very hard to communicate with, but the erasmus coordinator, Iolanda, was absolutely lovely and helped everywhere she could.

transfer of credits

I am obviously sad that the grades won't be directly transferred to my transcript (instead it will just say that I passed the courses, I think), but I definitely understand. UAIC told me it might take up to five weeks for me to receive the transcript, so I'm looking forward to it.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

We had a warm welcome by the ESN with several activities and parties. I stayed in the dorm, so I was immediately surrounded by fellow Erasmus students, which made settling in easier. I loved meeting so many people from so many different cultures. I do have to say that it was often exhausting in the beginning, but I got used to it pretty soon.

accommodation

Not sure how to say this, but it was not great. I think it was mainly the cockroaches in the kitchen that I found horrible, I think that says enough. The people were very nice though, and I loved staying in the same building with so many friends. In the first months I had a bit of a hard time adjusting to living with three people in the same room. Especially as a trans person in Romania, I was very nervous about this, also because there is no lock on the bathroom doors. Luckily, everything went alright. The accommodation was really not the best part of this stay, but I guess it can always be worse.

leisure & culture

I thought there would be no culture shock because I'm half Romanian, but there definitely was. Everything was very different from The Netherlands, literally everything, so I was very surprised and sometimes very sad to this. I soon realised how privileged I am to live here, which brought its own set of emotions. Eventually I accepted this and started to dig more into my Romanian cultural part, and now I really love it. There was not a



great deal to do in Iasi in comparison to other Romanian city, but I really think it's about who you do it with. I went on many trips with my friends so we definitely enjoyed our time.

suggestions/tips

Have as few expectations as possible - however cliché that may sound. Also: try not to stick with the people from your country, and mingle! Personally, there was no one with me from The Netherlands, and it really made me seek out different cultures, which made me learn a lot.

CONCLUSIONS

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

I think it really depends on your intentions. If you mean to continue high-level education during Erasmus with challenging courses, I don't think Iasi is for you. If you're more into going abroad for personal development and cultural growth, then definitely yes! It's not an easy destination, but a great experience.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

Actually, yes! I know Romania is not known as the safest place for queer people or for women in general, but in all honesty, I have felt much safer in Iasi than in Utrecht. Not one incident has happened and my friends generally felt the same. I even went to Pride in Iasi, which was a very safe and fun event, so I think that's an important addition to make.