Universiteit Utrecht

# UU Study Abroad Report Form

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| faculty/college | School of Governance |
| level | ☒ bachelor's ☐ master's |
| name study programme | Bestuurs- en Organisatiewetenschap |

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|---|---|
| destination city & country | Norman, Oklahoma, United States |
| name university abroad | University of Oklahoma |
| start date | 15 / 08 / 2022 |
| end date | 23 / 12 / 2022 |

## PREPARATION

exchange application process

OU wasn't my first choice. I actually wanted to go California, Florida or Rome but I was unlucky with the lottery. I really still wanted to go the U.S., which had Binghamton University and OU left as possible locations, so I picked OU.

The exchange application process for the University of Oklahoma is pretty clear, and if you have questions you can always ask Rhonda. The visa process is, however, more stressful. This has multiple steps which you have to take. If you make sure you take every step *immediately*, the visa process is not so scary. But make sure you take every step as quickly as possible, as waiting can cause a lot of stress in the end. There was a very long waiting time at the embassy to make an appointment, but luckily students got a waiver and were able to mail the documents (even your passport) to the embassy instead of having to go there physically.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

I personally didn't need any counselling or support.

academic preparation

OU's education level is low when compared to UU, so you don't need to prepare academically.

language preparation

Utrecht University students don't have to do an English test: UU sends you a document that waives this. Outside of that, you'll manage just fine in daily life if you had English in high school (so pretty much everyone).

finances

It is very expensive to study in the United States, even though Oklahoma is one of the cheaper states. To be able to go the United States, you need to be able to show that you have 7500 dollar in your bank account or that your parents can vow for you. 7500 will probably get you through the semester, but if you want to do fun activities and especially if you want to travel you'll need to save more. I believe I spent more than 12000, but I did a lot of travelling while I was there. Sadly the dollar was very strong compared to the euro, which cost me a lot of money.

## STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)

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| I did courses in Public Health, the U.S. criminal justice system, political communication, and finally international relations. Enrolling is pretty simple and I got 4/5 courses that I wanted (I didn't need 5 because I only needed 15 ECTS. However, you need to be enrolled in at least 12 credit hours as an undergraduate student to I took 4). If you don't like a course it's very easy to switch courses in the first two weeks. Make sure you check where courses are held and check Ratemyprofessor to see how people rate the professor. Take this rating with a grain of salt though, because Americans complain *a lot* about their courses for no reason. |
| academic quality of education activities |
| The academic quality of OU is low. A lot of times it's more about remembering theory, facts and statistics instead of really applying theory in an insightful way like at UU. What makes it challenging though is that I personally had a lot of deadlines every week. Because of this I was studying about as much at OU as I was doing at UU. Grading however is very subtle, so it's easy to get straights As. |
| counselling & support at receiving university abroad |
| The counselling and support at OU are very good, a lot better than in Utrecht. I personally didn't need it, but I know it's very well organized for people who do. |
| transfer of credits |
| My credits are still in the process of being transferred. |

| **STUDENT LIFE** |
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| welcome & orientation programme |
| There is a free shuttle that picks you up from the airport. This is exemplary of OU's organization: the university is very well organized and they take very good care of you. They gave us a SIM card that we could use during the semester that was free for the first month for example. There is only one orientation day and that one's pretty formal (they explain pretty much everything which is nice, but it takes a lot of time and is super boring). But you don't really need more orientation anyway since you'll just become friends with the other internationals at your housing pretty quickly. |
| accommodation |
| All the UU students lived at Traditions West during my semester. There are other options but I would not pick them over Traditions (West or East), since all the international students that you want to hang out with are at Traditions and Traditions is a pretty nice accommodation. It's not cheap but it's a nice room in a small apartment that has a dishwasher, a washing machine, a dryer, an oven, et cetera. There is also a swimming pool and a jacuzzi. It doesn't matter that much if you go to Traditions West or East, but our semester there were more parties at West since most of our international group lived there. East is a bit closer to campus, but West has the 7/11; the campus bus stops at both. |
| leisure & culture |
| From day one you'll get to experience American culture just like in the movies. What is nice about Oklahoma is that it is not very touristy so you really get to experience American culture. OU is (normally, sadly not this season) very good at football, so gamedays (and tailgating) are huge. I would recommend OU specifically for people who are very interested in sports, as you can easily go to all sorts of sports games (NBA, college basketball/baseball, soccer) if you want to. Get a season pass for the football: its around 200 bucks which is pretty cheap and if you can't go to a game you can just sell it (if OU is doing well you can break even on the season pass if you sell your ticket even just for one game).<br><br>Oklahoma is not like California however, so you'll probably get bored of it pretty soon. Luckily it's pretty easy to rent a car and go on a road trip (I went to New Mexico, Texas and Chicago) or take a 30 minute uber to the |

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| airport and fly somewhere (I went to SF and NYC). If you're not travelling there's always a lot of things going on around campus and you can also go out of course. |
| suggestions/tips |
| Bring a credit card and don't forget to bring whatever device your bank uses to do personal banking (like a Raboscanner or eDentifier). Second, you can open a bank account at Chase, which is pretty easy. I think this is better than paying everything with your Dutch credit card, because your Dutch credit card won't be accepted everywhere.<br><br>Also, Norman is a big place and the U.S. is notorious for requiring a car to go anywhere. This was kind of difficult, even though I had an American roommate with a car. So become friends with Americans and ask if they can for example drive you to Walmart (they don't mind). But in general be prepared for a place that is not very pedestrian/bike friendly. |

| **CONCLUSIONS** |
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| would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain |
| I definitely would. Oklahoma is of course not California or NYC, but it's still a very nice way to experience the United States. Oklahoma is like Texas in that it is pretty 'country' so if you like to experience southern culture come to OU. It's also very interesting if you're interested in American politics and the divide between progressive and conservative Americans. The classes I took were very interesting and I really learned a lot about Americans and American culture. |
| do you have any additional advice or comments? |
| Go in the fall season if you can, because it has the football season which is very important. It's also the time when OU – University of Texas is played in Dallas which is a thing you definitely want to experience.<br><br>When you arrive at your accommodation, there will be nothing there (pans, dishes, pillows, sheets, et cetera.). For this reason, try to make sure that you take a flight that lands before the evening, so you have time to go to Walmart and buy everything you need. |

Universiteit Utrecht

Contact exchange@uu.nl if you want to get into contact with one of our students.

# UU Study Abroad Report Form

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| faculty/college | Humanities |
| level | ☐ bachelor's X☐ master's |
| name study programme | New Media and Digital Culture |

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| destination city & country | Norman, Oklahoma, United States of America |
| name university abroad | University of Oklahoma |
| start date | 18 / 01 / 2022 (dd/mm/yyyy) |
| end date | 30 / 05 / 2022 (dd/mm/yyyy) |

## PREPARATION

exchange application process

I got clear instructions from my abroad university what to do. The biggest problem was the very short time window to get the visa. You can only start to apply for a visa once you receive the right documents from the abroad university. It all worked out but getting the visa was the most difficult part of the whole process.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

Utrecht University tried to support me and others when applying for the exchange.

academic preparation

I took some courses which didn't ask for any special requirements.

language preparation

English was no problem since I consider myself to be pretty proficient.

Finances

You need a lot of money if you want to go abroad. The US requires you to have at least 10,000USD on your bank account (which you need to proof of course). So this definitely something to keep in mind when applying. I did not know this before applying for the US, but luckily I had been saving money before I wanted to go abroad so I had the necessary money at my disposal.

## STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

| study programme (content and organisational issues) |
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| I received very clear information by the abroad university how to choose which courses. I needed to send my selection to the exchange student coordinator. She would then make sure I was enrolled at the right courses. I even switched one course during the first week of class, which she also managed for me. I took courses from two different studies: communications and media. As long as they fit the schedule everything was fine. |
| academic quality of education activities |
| I found the courses fairly easy. Maybe it is because I already completed a bachelor's, and I participated in bachelor level courses, but I must say that the courses weren't that challenging. The quantity of assignments was maybe more, but the quality lower. |
| counselling & support at receiving university abroad |
| The student exchange coordinator was great. I did not really make use of the services, but I know others did and they were very satisfied with the support. |
| transfer of credits |
| This organised by the two universities themselves. I only need to request to transfer the credits to Osiris at UU. |

| STUDENT LIFE |
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| welcome & orientation programme |
| We had a special day as our orientation programme. It's only a day and did not necessarily meet new people, this happened naturally at our student complex which was a great place to socialise. Additionally, I found out (only too late) that there also was a "cousin system". This meant that you could get in contact with a local student and do activities together. Also, the university of Oklahoma organised transfers form the airport to the student houses. This is great when you arrive in a new country to have a friendly transfer ready. |
| accommodation |
| The houses themselves were great regarding space, however, when you arrive nothing is there. The whole house is empty: no plates, no cutlery, no pots and pans, no pillow or blanket on the bed, not one roll of toilet paper. This a bit of a shock, but I managed with my house mates the first day. We could have been warned before, because there is no supermarket nearby. Arrive in the afternoon, because people who arrived at night had it rough. After the first days, it is finding out how to get to the supermarket. I, together with my house mates, used services such as Uber and Lyft or had it delivered at our home. The student complex itself is amazing. Since almost all international students live together, getting to know the other international students is relatively easy. |
| leisure & culture |
| Nearby the campus there is a street with some bars where I used to go out during the weekends. Other than that I used to hang out with other international students at our student complex. There is a pool, a basketball court, a (beach) volleyball court and in the club there is table tennis and a pool table. Hanging out with the international students is great fun and they are mostly very open. Oddly enough, the Americans were hard to reach. They did not seem to be very open for new social contacts. |
| suggestions/tips |
| Especially in the first weeks be active regarding getting social contacts. Most people are especially then extremely open to get to know as many people as possible. You will quickly find people to hang out with which the exchange so much more fun. Of course getting to know a different education system is valuable on its own, but getting to know people from different cultures was personally the most interesting thing I experienced. |

Universiteit Utrecht

| CONCLUSIONS |
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| would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain |
| Yes I would recommend the university. The campus itself is beautiful and the student complex is amazing. However, it can feel like you are locked up in Norman, Oklahoma. The town itself hasn't much to offer so after a few weeks, you know the place. Unfortunately this is America, so don't expect much regarding public transport. If you want to see different places, rent a car. The plus side to this seemingly disadvantage was that the experience was the same for all international students. As a result, we would spend much time together which made me feel to be part of a special community which I loved. |
| do you have any additional advice or comments? |
| Nothing to add. |