



Hebrew University of Jerusalem

2021-2022

PREPARATION
exchange application process
The application process for Utrecht University was actually not very complicated. All I had to do was have my study plan signed, submit a motivation letter and upload a language certificate. The application process for the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, on the other hand, was quite extensive. There were approximately 15 steps to complete, including: submitting your contact information as well as family's, recommendation letters from professors, complete medical records (signed by your primary care physician), your resume, and self-written essays.
counselling & support at Utrecht University
During the preparation I occasionally had contact with the University, most of it was about whether or not my exchange would continue despite the pandemic. I also attended an information evening about what should not be forgotten when preparing for an exchange. It also happened occasionally that the University contacted me because, for example, I had forgotten to adjust something in Osiris.
academic preparation
Academically, all I had to do was pick my courses for the semester. I had frequent contact about this with a study advisor from the Hebrew University via zoom. What I didn't know at the time was that faculty courses last a month longer than international exchange courses. This could have been communicated better.
language preparation
I had already submitted my English language certificate during the application process, so that was sufficient in terms of preparation.
finances
Unfortunately I couldn't make use of an Erasmus grant, but I was told this well in advance. Furthermore, about a month before departure, I had to pay the entire amount for housing on campus + Israeli health insurance, which was quite large to pay in one go.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD
study programme (content and organisational issues)
As an exchange student at Hebrew University, you can choose to take faculty or exchange courses. The faculty courses are generally of a higher academic level, but also yield fewer ECTS. The exchange courses are often about Israel, the conflict, Judaism and other matters that give you a better insight into the complexity of Israeli-Palestinian society, but are also relatively simple. These courses do yield more ECTS. You can still switch courses during the first week of the semester, if you notice (after attending your first lecture) that it is not quite what you were looking for.
academic quality of education activities
Although I am not of the opinion that the academic quality of the courses at Hebrew University can be compared with that of Dutch universities, I was positively surprised about the versatile range and good professors. It's quite easy to get high grades, but it certainly doesn't happen without a bit of effort.
counselling & support at receiving university abroad
Contact with study advisors at Hebrew University was always accessible and fast. Emails were answered quickly and it was also easy to walk into their office during office hours.
transfer of credits



I haven't requested a transfer of credits yet

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

The Hebrew University has an extensive welcome and orientation programme for newly arriving exchange students. Every beginning of the new week is marked by an incoming newsletter informing you of activities to partake in such as tours or parties etc. Especially in the beginning this was a necessity, because you didn't know the place and the people that well yet. As for the university itself, there isn't really a welcome programme. The first week of your courses are for you to orientate and see if you wish to continue with them (shopping week), but nothing other than that.

accommodation

I chose to live in the student village on Mount Scopus, which is dormitory housing for students studying at the Hebrew University. I loved living in the student village, because it was an easy way of making friends and seeing them often. A downside of the dorms is that they're not luxurious. Appliances often break, we had to buy loads of new kitchenware and had many problems with the running water and electricity. This was a bit of a shock, seeing as the rent for dorms are pretty expensive. Although the dorm itself isn't perfect, it is still a great option because of the location (close to the university) and the liveliness. I wouldn't necessarily recommend renting a flat in the city, unless you're staying for longer than half a year or already know who you would want to live with. This option is also more expensive than living in the dorms.

leisure & culture

I don't think there are many places more culturally challenging than Jerusalem and the country it is in. If you are religious (or interested in religion as a concept), there is enough to discover. There are important holy sites for Christians, Muslims and Jews all around. The city also has amazing museums and there are informative tours to do around the city. Leisure-wise, there is more than enough to do as well. There are beautiful hiking trails near the Dead sea and the Golan heights. Also, hot springs and other natural waters are all around Jerusalem. But of course, you can also take the public transport to Tel Aviv where you'll be with your feet in the sand within an hour. The nightlife in Jerusalem is also very adequate. There are a lot of nice bars at your disposal and it's usually very busy. Clubbing however is something to do in Tel Aviv. There are loads of them and every one has a different vibe/music.

suggestions/tips

If you try to schedule your courses for the beginning of the week (Sunday/Monday – Wednesday/Thursday), it means you will have time in the weekend to go on road trips all around the country. I would really recommend this because then you avoid Shabbat in Jerusalem, when everything is closed (even public transportation, bars, restaurants etc).

CONCLUSIONS

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

I would 100% recommend this university to others. Although I had no idea what I could expect from a city in the Middle-East this culturally, politically and historically challenging, I know now it will probably be one of the most interesting places I will ever go. It wasn't always easy; there is of course a lot of tension in Jerusalem and neighbouring cities. However, I do know living and studying here is an experience I learned a lot from so I recommend everyone else to do the same!

do you have any additional advice or comments?