



Università degli studi di Parma

2022-2023

PREPARATION	
exchange application process	
	The process was a bit difficult at times because of the communication with the host university. You'll have to mail a lot and remember the deadlines well. Try to follow the online application webinar organised by the Parma uni, it makes things a bit clearer and you can ask questions.
counselling & support at Utrecht University	
	The International Exchange office always answered my mails and helped me with my questions.
academic preparation	
	No academic preparation was needed. However, be careful that you meet the requirements for some courses though. These requirements are to be found in the course catalogue. In my case this was the possession a Cambridge C1 diploma, which not every student in The Netherlands has.
language preparation	
	I already knew some Italian for personal reasons, and it came in very handy. I advise you to do a few small courses online, nothing too serious and you should be fine. Just to have an overall feeling of the language and maybe to make the application process a bit easier, since not everything on the Uni of Parma site is translated to English. Also a lot of other Erasmus people didn't know a word of Italian when they came. You will get a few language courses provided by the Uni too.
finances	
	Do not underestimate the cost of living!!! I have worked half a year prior to my exchange, and this was highly needed. You will want to go out for coffee/gelato everyday, eat in the lovely restaurants and go on trips. The Napoli and Rimini trip organised by ESN are 200 euros each for example, so please have enough money to be able to enjoy all of it, because it is truly worth it. I also don't think that it's handy to look for a job in Parma, since your uni schedule will be quite random and it's better to travel in your free time instead of sweating as a waitress for 8 euros an hour for example.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD	
study programme (content and organisational issues)	
	On the site of the university there is a list of courses that are taught in English. From this list I chose a few courses that seemed interesting to me, but they were not necessarily law courses, so choosing from different departments is ok. I chose Public Economics (extremely difficult, I do not recommend), Intercultural Communication, European and International Labour law and European Legal Roots. At first I had some different courses included in my Learning Agreement, but during the first weeks I found out that one didn't exist for example. Luckily you can adjust your Learning Agreement so that's what I did.
academic quality of education activities	
	The courses were way easier than courses at the UU, and also some were more interesting than the others. Also the professors have a very tolerant attitude for Erasmus students. Questions are always very welcome and also during the exams the professors are willing to discuss and help you whenever you're having troubles answering, instead of just failing you. The exams that I had were mostly written, or it was a presentation.
counselling & support at receiving university abroad	
	I didn't need any counselling, but make sure to have a proactive attitude if you do: the university is sometimes very slow with answering mails.
transfer of credits	



The credits are on a scale of 30. 18 out of 30 is a sufficient. All my credits were 26 or above and the UU has transferred them into sufficient.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

I haven't been to any welcome activities hosted by the university, but I did go to all the activities organised by the ESN Parma. Mostly in the beginning of the exchange this is an excellent way to get to know the others.

accommodation

Finding accommodation in Parma not as easy as you'd think. The Italians have a housing crisis just as in Utrecht, so please start on time with finding accommodation. I entered in different facebook groups, for example 'Stanza a Parma' or Affitto studenti Parma, etc. and that is where i eventually found my room about 1,5 months prior to departure. For this room i paid 250 euro monthly (other people paid around 300 and maximum 500). However I was very lucky and i had to actually videocall with the other housemates as a kind of 'hospi'. Other people i know found a room via www.dovevivo.com (their response rate is very low so try to call them and spam them with mails), and an option that is always possible if you're not too late, is the housing of the university itself. There are a few locations in the city/ on the campus that you can just book if you have your university credits. Search for Vietrina Alloggi by Er.GO Parma. Other possible options are idealista.it or housinganywhere.com. My tip is to try to live with Italians since you will probably only really hang out with other internationals. Also try to not live on the campus. Parma is small and bikeable but the uni (law faculty) is in the center and you'll also mostly meet with friends in the center, so try to live max 10 mins by bike from the center.

leisure & culture

Parma is absolutely beautiful. Start with exploring the city, the museums and parks, and of course the restaurants, bars, café's. By train you can reach amazing cities very easily and for way less money than in the Netherlands. Go to Reggio Emilia, Bologna, Modena, Milan etc, these are all trips that you can do in a day by train. Also try to join the ESN trips since they're a lot of fun. Then also plan some bigger trips to bigger cities. If you book in advance through Trenitalia or Italo, you can reach Florence, Rome, Venice etc. in no time. What you really miss in Parma is a beach, so maybe plan a small trip with your friends to the beaches in the south, where everything is cheaper and the water is clearer than ever.

suggestions/tips

CONCLUSIONS

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

Absolutely! I had the time of my life in Parma, it is quite small and cute, so if you want the big city Erasmus experience then i wouldn't suggest it, but after a few weeks Parma feels like home. You will have your favorite meet up spots, you'll accidentally see your fellow Erasmus people/ uni classmates on the streets or in the club. The real nightlife is only from Thursday to Saturday but you have a huge amount of options and clubbing is a lot of fun there. The other nights are always perfect for going to a bar. As I said it's also an excellent city to travel, as a lot of other places are relatively close to Parma. The education should not be a priority, since the academic level is below what we're used to at the UU (at least in the courses i chose). It's all about the experience of travelling, getting to know the italian lifestyle, and meeting a lot of amazing people.

do you have any additional advice or comments?



PREPARATION

exchange application process

Overall, my application went quite well. The application on the side of the UU was very manageable. If you keep in mind all the deadlines and if you upload your documents in time it will be pretty easy to apply at UU. The application at the side of the University of Parma required a bit more patience, but in the end it all worked out well. I would advice you to start in time and then it will all be fine, but you will have to send them multiple emails and call them a few times to get all the information and documents you need.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

I didn't need any counselling or support from Utrecht University. I think that if I would have needed it, there would be enough support available at Utrecht University.

academic preparation

I didn't need any academic preparation for my courses in Parma.

language preparation

I didn't speak any Italian before. I followed a few Italian lessons at home to be able to understand a little bit of Italian and in Parma I followed a language course at the University. I only followed courses in English so I didn't need to speak Italian for University. If you wanna follow courses in Italian, I think there are language requirements. Keep in mind that not everybody speaks English in Italy, so sometimes it could be useful to speak a little bit Italian.

finances

I think that the prices in the stores and in restaurants are a bit similar to the Netherlands. Also the rent is similar to the rent in the Netherlands. Do keep in mind that you will probably be making a lot of trips through Italy and this will cost some money. Remember to apply in time for the Erasmus grant.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)

I did my exchange during my bachelors. I followed three courses from the law department and one Italian language course. I followed the courses: public economics, european legal roots and contract law, globalization and digital markets. Because all the courses were from the law department there were no problems with my schedule and all the courses were in the same building. If you decide to follow courses from a different department this could however be different. It was quite a challenge to figure out which courses I could follow in the beginning. It was a bit unclear if the courses were taught in the second semester and how many credits you could get for them. So I would advise you to start in time with figuring out which courses you want to follow.

academic quality of education activities

The courses I followed were very doable overall. The only course that was a bit more difficult was the public economics course. This course was described as a course for law students, but it was quite an economical course. If you are a law student I would not immediately advise this course, because you will have to put a lot of effort in catching up on the economics.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

The incoming office at the University of Parma is always friendly and ready to help you. However, they take a long time to respond to your emails, so you need to have a little patience with them.

transfer of credits

My credits have been transferred within two weeks, so that went quite fast.



STUDENT LIFE
welcome & orientation programme
The University organizes some welcome meetings which are nice for the more practical information. ESN ASSI Parma organizes a welcome week with a lot of social activities where you can meet a lot of people. I would advise you to join all the activities in the beginning. They are fun and that is how I met most of my friends.
accommodation
Finding accomodation in Parma can be quite hard, but in the end everybody finds a room. I would advise you to start in time with looking for a room. There are a few sites reccomeded by ESN and the University where you can find a room or you can try to find a room through Facebook. There are also some people that join the Whatsapp group from ESN and find a room through there. I would try all the different options and then you will be able to find something in the end.
leisure & culture
I really liked Parma for my Erasmus. It is relatively small so you will really know the city by the end of your exchange. You can do everything by foot or by bike (a lot of people ride a bike in Parma!). Parma is a really nice Italian city that offers everything you need. Parma is famous for its food, so I would definitely recommend to go out for dinner as often as possible. Parma is also located in the middle of Italy and has a good train connection. You can easily make trips all over Italy. ESN ASSI Parma is the organization for Erasmus students in Parma. They organize a lot of activities and trips. There is an activity at least every week. These activities are the easiest way to make friends in Parma.
suggestions/tips
Make a lot of trips around Italy and visit the smaller towns as well!

CONCLUSIONS
would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain
I would absolutely recommend everybody to go to Parma! I had a really good time. I really felt like I have experienced the Italian lifestyle. The people, the city and the food are all amazing.
do you have any additional advice or comments?
Enjoy your time! It will be over before you know it.

2021-2022

PREPARATION
exchange application process
The application process from the side of the UU was relatively easy. I would advise you to have a look at all the different possibilities (both exchanges that are open to all UU students and exchanges that are specifically for the LEG department). Keep an eye on the deadlines and opening hours of the student point/international exchange office, so you have time to get all your documents signed on time. The Italian organisation proved to be stereotypical: everything took a while and it was difficult to get all the documents signed on time. The application process was not as streamlined from the side of Unipr (Università di Parma) as it was from the side of the UU. But this is a great excersize in patience, and everything was sorted in the end. I would say: do not stress about it, sometimes an extra e-mail might be needed but in the end it will all work out. The people at Unipr are very relaxed and will try to help you in online webinars that explain the whole process.



counselling & support at Utrecht University
I didn't need specific counselling or support from the UU.
academic preparation
It wasn't needed to do any academic preparation.
language preparation
I didn't have prior knowledge of Italian, so before coming to Italy I studied for one month to have some basic knowledge of the language. I chose courses in English, to ensure I would be able to understand everything. If you choose courses in Italian, I believe there is a language requirement.
finances
Remember to apply for the Erasmus Grant and also the Travel Green Grant, if you plan on going using sustainable ways of travelling (I took the train from Utrecht to Parma, which ticket got reimbursed by this Grant).

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD	
study programme (content and organisational issues)	I did this exchange during my master's, so only master courses (laurea magistrale in Italian) would be added to my diploma. I chose courses that were in English, one from the faculty of law, one from economics and one from philosophy. I also followed two language courses by the Unipr, but these unfortunately cannot be added to my diploma as they are not explicitly courses on a master level. My timetables frequently overlapped, as the courses I chose were from different faculties. This however didn't pose too much problems, as all teachers were okay with me only attending some of the lectures.
academic quality of education activities	Only the philosophy course I chose was on the same level (or even more difficult) as the courses I was used to from the UU. The law course and the economics course were both easier. Some exams were oral instead of written, which I was not used to, but this didn't cause any difficulties as the teachers are very friendly and make you feel at ease.
counselling & support at receiving university abroad	The incoming staff from Unipr didn't respond quickly to e-mails, but they organised a lot of webinars to get everyone started. They are friendly and always try to help you.
transfer of credits	As of now, the credits have not been transferred yet.

STUDENT LIFE	
welcome & orientation programme	Unfortunately I had covid during the welcome week, so I couldn't join these activities. There were some events, partially organised by the Unipr and partially organised by ESN ASSI Parma, the Erasmus association of Parma.
accommodation	For a lot of international students, finding a house in Parma was difficult. I joined a group chat on Whatsapp with a lot of students who were in Parma the semester before me, and via this chat I was able to find a room 1,5 month before coming to Parma. Almost all Erasmus students live in the centre of Parma. You can also try contacting ESN Assi Parma, they will know some websites and options you can try to find accommodation.
leisure & culture	



Parma is a perfect city to live in as an Erasmus student, as it is relatively small. You will meet everyone very easily on the streets, and it is always just 5-15 minutes by foot to meet your friends, go to the University, get a gelato/drink/pizza etc. ESN ASSI Parma organises a lot of events, especially in the beginning these are nice to join to get to know new people. Parma is a great city also as a starting point to travel - many day trips are possible, as well as longer trips with friends from Erasmus or from home. I joined a gym here, I participated in a student orchestra, I met with an Italian lady to practice my Italian, had a night out with almost all my Italian classmates... it is very easy to be social here.

suggestions/tips

Join ESN and meet new people! For me, the skiing trip was one of the best experiences (and I had never skied before!).

CONCLUSIONS

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

I would definitely recommend this university and Parma as a city, if you want to experience la dolce vita and enjoy everything that Italy has to offer. If you are looking for very academic courses, I am sure you can find some here, but mostly I would recommend Parma because of the great experience it was on the whole and not necessarily because of the academic knowledge you will gain. The beautiful landscape, Italian food and culture, many many hours of sun every day, amazing people from all around the world will make this exchange unforgettable.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

Take a lot of pictures/videos, time flies!

PREPARATION

exchange application process

Before deciding to go study abroad I looked on the website of the University of Utrecht to look into all the destinations where it was possible to study. Unfortunately I was a bit slow/late so my first choices were already taken; I applied for the second deadline. I ended up in Parma, Italy. It was not my first choice but because I was late this was my own fault.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

I had a lot of help from the University. I remember I e-mailed them a lot with questions about destinations, for example destinations which did not offer any law based courses (while I am studying law), or questions about deadlines, questions about the forms. They were very helpful and replied quickly; also it is nice to be able to get in contact with the international office by calling.

academic preparation

I looked into the subjects that the University offered. I have been studying in Italy before so I kind of knew how and what and how the levels will be. In Italy I followed now twice masters subjects while I am still in my bachelor, but I knew from previous experience that this is not a problem considering the levels.

language preparation

Since I did study in Italy before, I knew a bit of Italian already. I did some extra reading to prepare a bit for the language; because in Italy it is really nice to know some Italian. A lot of Italians (also students) do not know English at all and it can be very helpful to find your way, to meet new people or to ask for help in any situation.

finances

Before going to Parma I did work extra in the summer, to prepare some money for there. I travelled a lot when I was in Parma so I did really need that money and I was happy I saved some! If you're in Parma it is super easy



to take the train all over italy, to book airbnbs with your friends, to go to the most beautiful cities, beaches, or whatever, and it's a super waste not to be able to do this because of money. So i do really advice you to save so money to make the most out of it!

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)

I studied several subjects; International politics, English for International relations, Philsopohy of mind, Rights protection in the EU union, and an italian language course. I looked on the website of the university to find my subjects that i wanted to follow; i also e-mailed a lot with the university because the website is not super clear. It was quite a task to figure out which subjects where available in english, which subjects were given first semester, how much ECTS each subjects was.. and so on. So i suggest you start on time with figuring out your subjects because it will take some time.

academic quality of education activities

In my subjects we had some guests lectures, we had to do short essays, we had final exams, we had moot courts.. It was very diverse. I did have all my subjects on Master level but I did not notice this; it was not like it was harder for me then my bachelor subjects in Utrecht. Do keep in mind that everything is in english; but also don't be afraid of that. You'll quickly get used to that, especially since you're also probaly with a lot of international people speaking english all day.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

I had a lot of contact with the International office in Parma, concering among other things my subjects, the schedule, overlap of subjects and so on. They responded quite quickly. I also found it very nice that they organised several meetings online before the start of the semester. In the meetings they explained a lot about the university, the subjects, the erasmus forms. You were also allowed to ask questions in the meetings to the international office.

transfer of credits

For doing the exams in Parma you had to register online, and after doing the exam you had to 'accept' the grade online. This was not complicated because they explain you very well. After finishing all my subjects/exams I e-mailed the international office for my transcript of records and they sended me in 2 weeks after me asking. The grades are in italian so not transferred to dutch grades yet. The transcript of records also states the credits I received for each subject.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

As said before, the international office of Parma organised a lot of online meetings before the start of the semester. These were very helpfull. Also after arriving in Parma, every erasmus student needed to go to the international office to submit theirselves. To be honest, this took a while; in Italy everything goes a bit slower then in NL + it is way more bureaucratic. I guess you just have to get used to this; at least I did. And eventually everything will be ok. It is also nice to know that the international office is close to the university and there are some open hours where you can come by to ask anything; I advice you to this instead of e-mailing, since waiting for a response by e-mail of the international office might take some time.

accommodation

For accomodation, I looked online and found something by the website Idealista. I was looking to have found something quite quick; I subrented a room for 1 semester from a girl. i know that a lot of students in Parma had a lot of difficulties finding a room; most landlords want someone for a year and not half a year. Also, finding something in general in Parma is hard. I know a lot of students who rented an airbnb for weeks before finding something. So my advice is to look into accomodation as soon as possible. Joining facebookgroups with other



people looking for rooms might be convient too.
leisure & culture
In italy everything goes a bit slower; something I personally really like but not everybody does. You just have to get used to this kind of lifestyle. What I like most is the amazing and cheap coffees (tip: drinking a cappuchino is only allowed before 11AM!!), the very good food (parma is the 'capital' of food of italy so Parma is perfect if you like food), the aperitivo's (5 euro for an aperol spritz including a lot of snacks), but also the beautiful architecture everywhere. The most beautiful churches and so on.
suggestions/tips
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Start on time figuring out which subjects you want to follow 2. Save some money to travel a lot (since Parma is super central and you can reach the most beautiful places from here) 3. Start on time looking fo raccomdation, which will save you not only stress but also a lot of money (otherwise you might end up in an airbnb) 4. Do a lot of things with the ESN organisation in Parma! ESN organises trips, or just drinks, city tours, and so on. By going to these events you'll meet a lot of international friends. If you go a lot to these events in the first 2 weeks you'll make your friend group there for the rest of the semester. I really made very good friends whom i all met on ESN events and we are still in contact now.

CONCLUSIONS
would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain
<p>Parma is quite small; I lived in Rome before and I had to adjust abit. What I liked a lot in Parma is that everything is close; all the students (including me) have a bicycle and it is very easy to meet up. In Rome this was more difficult since the city is huge. The university is good and well organised. What is also perfect, is that Parma is super central so from Parma it is easy to travel to beautiful places.</p> <p>If you like cosy, Parma is perfect for you.</p>
do you have any additional advice or comments?

PREPARATION
exchange application process
The application process was not so difficult. I wrote a motivation letter and had a appointment with the study advisor to discuss the options of doing extra courses after finishing my masters.
counselling & support at Utrecht University
The international office helped me a lot with all my questions
academic preparation
I did not do any academic preparation.
language preparation
I did a language course for Italian at Babel. It was usefull to understand a little more of the italian language, since my level was 0. In italy not many people speak english, especially in smaller cities. When you choose italian classes I would recommend to make sure your level is quite good before you will come, since the italian courses that they offer at the university are during your classes and not before. But I chose only english courses, so it was enough to do only a little bit before (but more for yourself and to get around in stores and with your



neighbors)
finances
I applied for the erasmusgrant and used my studentloan

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD
study programme (content and organisational issues)
I did italian courses, english for international relations, philosophy and european law.
academic quality of education activities
Since my courses were at a masters level they were not so easy, but the exams were not too difficult. The teachers were nice to international students and they were not too harsh I think. The english course was very easy, even though it was on a masters level, since italians are not so good in english usually.
counselling & support at receiving university abroad
They are very slow, but if you contact them they will help you with the most important things. Don't worry too much if you did not receive your taxcode or studentcard etc. Because it can take a long time, but I never had problems with not having it. Some houseowners will ask for it though, so my suggestion would be contact the incoming office a lot and don't wait too long, because I received my studentcard the week before I left parma...
transfer of credits
I am waiting for that now, so I can't say anything about that.

STUDENT LIFE
welcome & orientation programme
ESN is a nice association to get to know a lot of erasmus students. They organize a lot of trips (depending of the covid situation)
accommodation
I had an apartment, which was not super nice, but okay. I paid 400 euro per month, but I know a lot of people who paid less. So I think the normal prices are between 300-400 euro. In parma it's quite difficult to find something for short term, so start on time with looking on websites. De univeristy can help you sending good and thrustworthy websites, but they don't offer accomodation theirselve
leisure & culture
The culture in parma is very rich. I loved it. When you speak a little Italian your experience will get a lot better I think
suggestions/tips

CONCLUSIONS
would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain
I do recommend parma, if you like a smaller city where you can get to know most of the people and become part of the city. It's small enough to get to know all the places but not so small that it gets boring. It's really central and close to other big cities so you can travel a lot. I did another exchange in Florida and that was really good for partying, but in Parma I really got to chance to get to know Italy and the culture. I liked that it was small (I think you can compare it to Utrecht a little). But it's not as bruising as Bologna for example is.



do you have any additional advice or comments?

2019-2020

PREPARATION
exchange application process
Good. Everything was taken care of and I experienced zero stress.
counselling & support at Utrecht University
Good. Quick answers to my questions and no problems.
academic preparation
Was not necessary
language preparation
The university of Parma required a minimum of A2+ level. In order to reach the minimum, I decided to take 2 months of studying to learn the language (without knowledge of Italian before) and I passed the test quite easily. It was a risk, but at the end I am happy that I did it.
finances
I was able to take care of my own finances, with Erasmus+ grant support

(interrupted) STUDY ABROAD PERIOD
welcome & orientation programme
A little chaotic, but when you have a proactive attitude, you know what to do.
study programme (content and organisational issues)
The level of the programme is quite the same as in the Netherlands, so you learn a lot out of it. However in the evaluation, the university of Parma is less strict than Utrecht University.
academic quality of education activities
See above.
transfer of credits
Not done yet.

CORONAVIRUS CONSEQUENCES
support guidance of host university
Italy was the first European country with a lot of corona infections, so it was new for us, but from the beginning on there was a clear communication.
support guidance of home university
Good. I was called right away and received great and personal support from Vera.
online offer and quality of digital courses



It depended on the course. One course was quite chaotic, but the rest was very good.

suggestions/tips on digital exchange

For the course where it didn't go well: more lectures at specific times and more room for questions.

CONCLUSIONS

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

Sure. Parma is a beautiful Italian city with a nice faculty of law. The Erasmus group is compact, so there is a ESN community. The ESN organisation organises many activities in which you can take part quite easily. And from Parma there are many other activities to go on (for example by train). Furthermore, the fellow students and professors are really helpful and the relationships are more personal than I experienced in the Netherlands.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

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2016-2017

preparation

exchange/placement application process

I applied for Rome as my first choice, because I always wanted to travel to Italy since I never had been there. Unfortunately I was not selected and send to my second choice: Università degli studi di Parma. Which I was really happy about in the end, because I had the best time of my life.

counselling/support at home university

University Utrecht was perfect in helping me going to Italy. Because of the slow system in Italy, it took me months to get all the right documents. But the UU was kind and patience, so they gave me enough time to get all the documents right and still gave me the Erasmus Grand.

academic preparation

I already did all the required courses for Law in the Netherlands, so I was free to choose whatever I wanted in Italy

language preparation

Before I went to Parma, I tried to do a LOI course in Italian because the university already warned me that there were not many courses in English and that they recommend it. But because of my busy life in Utrecht I did not have the time for many courses. So I went to Italy without having a lot of knowledge of the language. But as soon as I arrived I discovered that almost none of the inhabitants spoke proper English and that Italian was necessary to learn. Luckily did the University offer language courses to learn Italian quickly. They started with an intense course with 4 days in the week Italian for 4 weeks and after there was an extended course for 8 weeks and 2 times in a week. So at the end my Italian was quite well!



finances

Before I went I made a plan of how to receive enough money while being in Italy and I had a big savings account to travel around Italy. Don't underestimate the cost of living in the north of Italy.

study/placement abroad period

study programme/work plan (concerning content and organisational issues)

When I arrived a lot of the chosen courses were not available anymore or were not in English anymore but in Italian. Since my Italian language was not good I could not choose the Italian courses. So I had to switch some of the courses. Most of my courses were on Master level because that is the point that the law faculty is offering English courses. This was not a problem because in the Master the classes are really small (max 10 people), which means that there is enough time for questions.

academic quality of education/placement activities

Different from what I expected, where the courses quite hard. Not more difficult than the Netherlands, but we always have the idea that the education is not good in the south of Europe. But this is not true, I learnt a lot from my international courses!

counselling/support at host institution/organisation

My host institution had a great support. I had my own coordinator in the University that assigned me to a law buddy and always mailed me back quickly. She also sometimes came by some classes to check if I made some friends in the University, since there are not many English speaking people in the Law faculty and she always asked if I was able to understand the classes. The organisation from each department was perfect, but I was following courses in three different departments. And when I had an overall question concerning all my courses, finding an answer was always harder. Than they made my e-mail a lot of people. But in the end I always got my answer.

transfer of credits

In Italy the system works a bit slow and takes a long summer holiday. So at the moment of writing this I still have not transferred my credits.

student life

welcome/orientation programme

Luckily, the welcome program was in English. When I arrived at the Erasmus office an English speaking Italian from ESN and from the International office were waiting for me and explained everything in perfect English. ESN started directly with organising events and trips, so it was easy to make international friends.

accommodation

The University does not offer rooms, but has a commission that helps you find a room. But apparently it was really hard to find a room in Parma and also really expensive. I was lucky to find a room via the Erasmus



Facebook group that was in the centre and not so expensive.

leisure/culture

The Italian culture, is like all south European cultures, different from our stressful lives in the Netherlands. As soon as I arrived and went to the Erasmus office and asked where the classes of that day were, they told me that I should spend my week exploring the city and making some new friends instead of directly diving into university. This exactly describes my life in Italy. The culture is way more laid back and being somewhere on time is never a requirement. For me this was in the beginning a bit strange because I was used to running all day to different appointments and there was not even time to use my Netflix during the week. In Italy of course I had to study and the courses were quite hard. But because I had more contact hours in a week I did not have a lot of home assignments. And after every 4 weeks there was some kind of holiday week (mostly in combination with Catholic events or liberation) in which there was time to study and read all your stuff. But there was plenty of time to travel and to hang out with friends.

The other cultural issue was that all the exams were oral. Which means that I had to talk for at least half an hour in Italian/English about what I learned instead of just normal written questions. The exam was hold in a big room with 100 students and you were questioned by 3 till 5 professors about your course. This was way more stressing and required a different way of studying.

Also the fact that Italians were a lot more bound to family and older people still think that woman should not work and you should be catholic, was in the beginning strange. But after some time you can embrace those statements.

But overall, I fell in love with the Italian way of handling things and with taking things easy.

suggestions/tips

Learn a bit of the language before going!

conclusions

would you recommend this host organisation/destination to others? please explain

Even though at the first moment I was a bit disappointed by going to a smaller Italian city, I had the best time of my life. Because of the smaller amount of internationals it was able to know a big part of them and to make my friends group of 30 people instead of 3 besties like the big city Erasmus students. Everytime I walked around in beautiful Parma, I was not only enchanted by the beauty but I also always saw people with whom I directly went for gelato or pizza. Thereby was Parma perfectly located in Italy which made it possible to travel a lot. I travelled almost every weekend, with ESN and also on my own with friends. I saw a lot of the magnificent cities and landscapes all over Italy.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

Don't hesitate to go to a country with a language that you don't speak well. It gives you the perfect opportunity



to learn to deal with these situations and you will learn another language quickly!

2015-2016

PREPARATION
exchange application process
Very clear instructions and help from my home university.
counselling & support at Utrecht University
Not always clear, but available any time for a call or appointment.
academic preparation
I was not prepared at all for the courses I followed in Italy because I changed my courses in Parma a few times.
language preparation
I followed a language course in Holland to prove I was at least level A2.
finances
Study finances, savings, parental support, and of course Erasmus fund.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD
study programme (content and organisational issues)
My learning agreement had a few problems so it took a while before everything was settled, but when it was, everything went smoothly.
academic quality of education activities
The Italian law educational system is very good, they were a bit 'better' than me, so the law subjects I followed were not easy, but they were definitely do-able.
counselling & support at receiving university abroad
You could always step by the international office when you had questions.
transfer of credits
Still not figured out, it really takes a while before everything regarding subjects is arranged. Also the system of overlapping courses from my home university is not a very honest system. If the information regarding a subject says something slightly different than the information you received, the exam committee believes the information instead of your personal experience.

STUDENT LIFE
welcome & orientation programme
Plenty of activities to get to know people.
accommodation
Was already arranged when I arrived, I could move in the day I arrived. I stayed in a shared apartment with other students. On facebook are also plenty of living options.



leisure & culture
Enough time to explore the city and the cities around parma, wit
suggestions/tips
Make sure to have a good contact with the International office of your receiving university BEFORE you're there. It will make things a lot easier regarding finding accommodation etc. And don't be afraid that things won't work out, because they will. Everyone is in the same position as you so there's always a solution! And most important, ENJOY!

CONCLUSIONS
would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain
Yes! Parma is a very cosy city with a very good university. If you are searching for a city where you will feel like home in no time and eat the best food ever, then Parma it is!
do you have any additional advice or comments?
No.

2009-2010

preparation
exchange/placement application process
I started my preparation long before the period of study in Italy. I had to fill out the application form and I had to hand in a motivation letter, my CV, plan of study and a financial plan. Then a study advisor judged my dossier on the progress of my study. After the positive outcome I was invited for a conversation as part of the selection procedure. Fortunately no one applied for a place in Parma, so I was immediately selected. By e-mail I received the application form and instructions for the enrolment at the university of Parma. Besides that I had to fill out a form to be awarded the Erasmus grant.
counselling/support at home university
For any problems I could always call and e-mail the International Office and the support and counselling always served in solving my problems.
academic preparation
I have always wanted to study in Italy, but in the three years of my bachelor notarial law I have never had the chance as I only had 7,5 ECTS space for a course of my choice. That is why I decided to take a fourth year of bachelor, in which I went studying in Parma for a semester to obtain the last 7,5 ECTS. Besides that I chose some courses that seemed interesting and those credits are merely serving as additional credits on top of my bachelor. I do not mind, because in my opinion extra knowledge never comes amiss and considering the fact that i might want to live in Italy in the future, anything is helpful. Because of the fact that I used the 7,5 ECTS of free choice of courses, I did not need any academic preparation. I only had to meet the specific requirements for bringing in the courses in my study programme at the University of Utrecht.
language preparation
As I have always wanted to learn Italian, I started my Italian language course in my first year of bachelor, knowing that somewhere in my bachelor period I would go studying in Italy for a certain period. First I went to Dante Alighieri, then to the James Boswell Institute and ultimately I left this summer to Italy far before my Erasmus period would start, to live in Milan for a month. There I attended level A2 of Italian and during my stay in Parma, the university offered a course Italian for Erasmus students level B1 for 4 ECTS. However I would recommend whilst learning the language to stay in the country itself. I noticed I hardly learned any Italian in the Netherlands, because I could not practice and



forgot the things I learned immediately after. The most helpful was the month I stayed in Milan at Scuola Leonardo da Vinci (officially recognised by the government of Italy) right before I left to Parma.

finances

The possibility of taking the 'Studiefinanciering' abroad was very welcome. Besides that I saved up some money before my departure and I also have a IBG loan and received the Erasmus grant. Thanks to all this I was able to enjoy my Erasmus period to the max, including making trips to Lago Maggiore, Milan, the Appennini, Munich and Gstaad.

study/placement abroad period

study programme/work plan (concerning content and organisational issues)

I know Italy's way of life ever since I was a one-year-old girl, so I expected that it would be more unorganised than the Netherlands and that they would be very open and easy going. It turned out it was exactly like that. If you are able to adjust to their way of living, you will have the time of your life! The University of Parma overall is a good university and for Italian standards organised.

On the internet they have a list of the courses they give, unfortunately most of them are annually. The most interesting courses for Erasmus students are given in the second semester, as well as the courses in English. For me that caused some problems in the first semester, so I would suggest to go to Parma either a whole year or the second semester.

Subscription for the courses does not exist. On the internet you will find the timetable and you simply go to the class. This is due to the fact that attending the courses in this university is not obligatory. Depending however on the teacher, because in one of my courses I had to write a paper which was part of my final exam.

At the University of Parma they have each semester 3 possibilities to give your exam. About two weeks before the date of the exam, you can subscribe yourself online up to 4 days before the exam. All of my exams were oral and in my opinion it is better than written exams, because it gives you a bit more space. In case you fail for the exam, you have two other possibilities left. Nonetheless, also this depends from the professor. For the same course I had to hand in the paper, the professor gave us only one possibility to give the exam.

If you might have a problem, the professors are very flexible and always willing to help you.

academic quality of education/placement activities

In my opinion the University of Parma has a good academic quality of education. The professors are very skilled and know a lot.

counselling/support at host institution/organisation

The international office of the University of Parma is always willing to help and they are accessible. Throughout the week their opening hours are from 9 - 12 o'clock, but in serious issues they are also available after opening hours and by e-mail.

transfer of credits

The evaluation system in Italy is different. Their system counts from 18/30 - 30/30 when you have passed the exam. If you failed you receive a note under 18/30. Even though 30/30 is the highest note, in special cases it is possible to receive a 30 con laude/ 30. The ECTS awarded for every course variate in a range from 2,4,6 and 9 ECTS.

Utrecht initially adopts sufficient or insufficient, but in the enclosure of your diploma will be stated the exact evaluation of the attended courses.

student life

welcome/orientation programme

On arrival you go to the International office where they give you the necessary information on the University and the internet access. They also help in finding accommodation.

accommodation

The accommodation I found through the international office and everything I needed was already in the apartment. From cooking utensils to toilet paper. Naturally this is not how it always is. Also I was lucky to live with a French Erasmus student who did not speak English, so from day one I spoke Italian with her. This helped me a lot in developing my



command of the Italian language, a lot better than the other Erasmus students, because they only speak English among each other.

If you would prefer to find accommodation living just with Italians, you will have to make work of it. Accommodation offers will be found in the main aula of the University and you will have to make some phonecalls. But I think it is definitely worth it, because you will pay less and you will learn Italian in a blink.

leisure/culture

The central location of Parma is perfect for making trips. For example to Milan, Bologna, Rimini, Lago Maggiore and many more. Parma is a historical city with original streets from Roman times, definitely a pleasant city to live in. It is also a rich city so the environment is well taken care of.

Italy is well known for its lively nightlife and also in Parma you will find plenty of people in the streets taking aperitivo in bars and at night dancing in the clubs. Wednesday is students night in one of the clubs NeroBianco, it's absolutely the place to be!

Because of the fact that Parma is not a big city, it is very personal and you will bump into people you know in the little scenic streets just like that. Basically my whole Erasmus period I had a favourite lounge bar & dinner club, Dolce Vita, where from day one I became friends with the staff. They made my stay very enjoyable. Obviously situations like these will not occur in the big cities like Rome or Milan.

ESN Parma organises many evenings, trips and club nights. However I must admit I did not attend any of these events. Personally I am not fond of the Erasmus philosophy among Erasmus students. They come to a country to party and have a good time, speaking and learning hardly any Italian. I came to Italy not to meet other Erasmus students, but because I wanted to live like an Italian, make Italian friends and open doors for my future career abroad. I feel more at home in Italy than in the Netherlands and in the end I succeeded in all the goals I wanted to reach. I feel I did not miss anything by not attending the ESN movement.

Public transport is quite well organised and the best thing of Parma is that they have people riding on bicycles everywhere!

All this together giving you a 'like-at-home' kinda feeling in no time!

suggestions/tips

I do not really have any suggestions or tips, but if you like traveling around, the train in Italy takes you anywhere you want to go and it is a lot cheaper than in the Netherlands!

conclusions

would you recommend this host organisation/destination to others? please explain

Yes I would certainly recommend this host organisation. It is a University with a good image and they offer interesting courses. The destination is also highly recommendable. Even though Parma is a small city, Utrecht students will certainly appreciate this. Parma gave me the feeling of Utrecht, whereas Rome would be more like Amsterdam. Parma is personal and everything is easily within your reach. The central location also offers you many possibilities to travel around in Italy. I would not have wanted to make another decision.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

As written above I would recommend students that want to go to Parma to go there either annually or the second semester to avoid any unwelcome circumstances concerning the courses and ECTS credits they offer.