



University of Aruba

2022-2023

PREPARATION	
exchange application process	
The application process was a little complicated, so do take your time to properly prepare! Try not to leave things to the last minute, since you often need signatures from your home University, which may take a while.	
counselling & support at Utrecht University	
The support at Utrecht University was alright. I went to a short preparational lecture about the (administrative) preparations and applications for your exchange. However, they did not fully inform us about certain deadlines, which gave me some stress in the end. Therefore, I do strongly urge you to do your own research and to read the manuals carefully, do you don't run into some unpleasant surprises.	
academic preparation	
I did not really do anything to 'academically prepare' for this exchange, I started my preparations before the semester started, and when I could successfully log into 'Blackboard'. It is good to know what to expect from your courses, since you are allowed to switch courses in the first week. I would therefore suggest you to read into the assignments and the necessary coursework before the semester starts.	
language preparation	
I did not have to do anything to prepare my language for this exchange, since my level of English was sufficient to participate in the English courses.	
finances	
Since the UK and Edinburgh are quite expensive, i saved up in advance. Accommodation is said to have an average price of 600-900 pounds, and the costs of living are also quite high. Of course, its also nice to make some trips if possible, and I have definitely spent way more then I would have in The Netherlands. So, these expenses are something to keep in mind.	

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD	
study programme (content and organisational issues)	
I found that the study programme of Law is actually quite similar to that in Utrecht. The courses were taught in the same way, and mostly consisted of a lecture and a seminar. For me personally, I found the workload lower in Edinburgh than in Utrecht, since you do three course in one semester instead of four. I did two 'third year' law courses (which they call honours law courses), and I did not think that they were too hard.	
academic quality of education activities	
The academic quality was nice, my teachers were good and I also enjoyed the content of the courses!	
counselling & support at receiving university abroad	
The University of Edinburgh is really helpful and well-organized. Whenever I had a question, they responded quite quickly and effectively!	
transfer of credits	
I have just finished my exchange, so I have not yet received the transfer of credits.	

STUDENT LIFE	
welcome & orientation programme	



I went to some of the events that the Office for Visiting Students organized, and that is where I have met my closest friends! It's a great way to meet other exchange students, and I would highly recommend going to some of the events in this programme.

accommodation

I had some trouble finding private accommodation, and I almost got scammed so be aware of that! Eventually, I signed up for University housing, even though I had heard that the chances of getting Uni accommodation are quite small. However, me and all my friends actually got placed in University housing, so I think this is definitely a really good option. I stayed in Brae house, which was really nice but there are also some cheaper options. However, I do not recommend staying in University housing on Cowgate, since my friends had trouble sleeping due to the noise coming from the street.

leisure & culture

The University had a really nice gym that was affordable! What also surprised me, is that almost all museums in Edinburgh are free. Also, I really liked the culture: the people were generally really nice and the students are very welcoming. Since the Uni is so international, students are not xenophobic at all towards Exchange students, which is really nice.

suggestions/tips

I would recommend joining a society while you're there; I joined the boxing club which was very fun, and I have done some amazing trips to the Highlands with the Hillwalking society. Most societies are really easy to join, and they are generally quite cheap! It's a good way to get to know other people and it really contributed to my experience in Edinburgh.

CONCLUSIONS

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

Yes, I would highly recommend Edinburgh as an exchange destination, for numerous reasons. The city is very beautiful, the student culture is really nice and the people are very open and welcoming. There is always something to do and the city is really lively, filled with nice bars, clubs, museums, and fun activities.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

After two weeks of staying in Edinburgh, I found out that you can take the bus for free if you are younger than 22! This is called the 'Young Scot Card'. You can also get discounts on certain things by using this card (such as: getting in to the Castle for 1 pound instead of 20 pounds). So, if you want to save some money, apply for this card when you have arrived! You can apply online, but you can also apply in person in the national library.



PREPARATION
Exchange application process at Utrecht University
The application process was quite easy to follow. Utrecht University provided us with a clear checklist needed in order to be applicable for the exchange program. Contact with the University of Aruba was more difficult, as they sometimes replied late to my e-mails.
Counselling & support at Utrecht University
I have had contact with the study advisors several times about my study plan in Aruba. They have helped me a lot in choosing a certain minor.
Academic preparation
Academic preparation was not needed for the minor I followed in Aruba.
Language preparation
I did not have to do anything on language preparation, as classes were in English or Dutch in Aruba. I learned some basics of Papiamentu during my stay there.
Finances (living costs)
Living in Aruba is more expensive than here in the Netherlands. Therefore, it is important to save enough money and be prepared for higher living costs.

Study period abroad /About the host university
Study programme (content and organisational issues at partner)
I chose to follow all the courses of the minor International Financial Management in Aruba. This minor accounted for 30 ECTS. Some other students chose to pick courses randomly from various faculties in order to attain the 30 ECTS.
Academic quality of education activities
The level in terms of academic difficulty was somewhat lower in Aruba. However, the lessons were more focused on real-world perspective and more practical, which I liked.
Counselling & support at receiving university abroad (before and during your stay)
The people at the University of Aruba were very helpful. However, I experienced that getting in contact or receiving answers to your questions often takes more time at the University of Aruba. I think that this is also a cultural thing on the island.
Transfer of credits
My credits have been transferred. It was a struggle at the start of my stay as the University of Aruba did not provide clear course manuals. As a result, it took some time for the exam commission of the University of Utrecht to determine the levels of courses.

STUDENT LIFE
Welcome/Orientation programme
The University of Aruba arranged two orientation days for all students (both exchange students as well as local students). This was a nice way to meet other students and get in touch with the Aruban culture. We had dinner at the university and went hiking the next day.
Accommodation
Accommodation is easy to find on the island. I stayed in Blue Village, as well as many other students and interns. In this way, it is easy to get in contact with other people. However, in my opinion the price was too high for



what you get if you are staying alone. I would recommend others to find an Airbnb with another student or stay at Marquee apartments.

Leisure & culture

There are a lot of fun things to do on Aruba. Most students go out on Wednesday and visit several bars and clubs (Bugaloe, Hidden, Mill). On Sunday, most people go to Moomba to go out. However, drinks are quite expensive so it is recommended to go to places where they have an happy hour.

Moreover, the island is a nice place for hiking and a fun thing to do is to climb the Hooiberg or visit the national park. There are also a lot of beautiful beaches to go to of course. Another recommendation is to get beach tennis lessons. Many people on the island exercise this sport and lessons are only around \$7.

Suggestions/tips (need to knows)

Tips:

- You have to rent a car at the island, so it is preferred to have a driver's license or to share a car with others. It is dangerous to bike/scooter.
- At the university, classrooms are very cold. So take some long trousers and sweaters with you.
- Get in touch with other students beforehand through Facebook groups. In this way, you can search for a roommate or someone to share a car with for example.

Beaches: Baby beach, Arashi beach, Eagle beach, Divi beach, Surfside beach, Mangel Halto (snorkling), Boca Catalina/Tres trapi (sea turtles)

Places to go out: Moomba, Hidden, Bugaloe, The Mill, Gusto

Places to eat: Surfside beach bar (food is quite cheap here and happy hour from 5-6 PM), Elements (more expensive, but very nice location at Manchebo beach), Bohemian (nice French restaurant at Palm beach), Lola's (Taco's for \$1 every Tuesday), Eduardo's (to get a smoothie or breakfast/lunch), Santos (coffee and breakfast)

Activities: Windsurfing/kitesurfing at Hadicurari Beach, Beach Tennis, visiting the National Park with a Jeep

CONCLUSIONS

Would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? Please explain why (or not)

I would certainly recommend Aruba as an exchange destination. I felt as a dream to study at such a beautiful island and it is nice to get to know another culture.

Do you have any additional advice or comments?

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2021-2022

PREPARATION	
exchange application process	
The exchange application process went relatively easy but was at times unclear. Finding housing was easy and recommendations were given by the university. I only knew what classes I was going to follow the week before the start of the semester. Only then had we gotten the updated version of the Study Guide. This was no surprise as deadlines are not very harsh in Aruba. The UA exchange office already knew our names before we even met, they were all very friendly.	
counselling & support at Utrecht University	
I had personal contact with Paula Banning, the non-Europe coordinator. This was of great use for all questions. The Teams meetings were useful for answering all uncertainties I had been writing down in a specific word document throughout the exchange process.	
academic preparation	
I followed a minor from a different faculty so there was no specific academic preparation necessary.	
language preparation	
Classes were in English or Dutch, it is nice to learn some Papiamentu basics to be able to greet people or say thanks.	
finances	
I was able to save enough money by working because I did not follow any classes in the fourth period beforehand. Aruban life is not cheap so I would advise to save up enough and loan extra from DUO.	

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD	
study programme (content and organisational issues)	
It was a puzzle which classes to follow as I devised my own minor. But even after classes had started we could still choose to follow other subjects. My classes were either 4 or 5 ECTS which made it a bit more difficult to assemble the puzzle. These classes were once a week for two hours during the entire semester (5 courses in total).	
academic quality of education activities	
The quality of education was lower than in the Netherlands but not bad. It is very dependent on the teacher. I had one very inspiring teacher whose courses I loved to follow. But there were also more chaotic teachers whose classes I did not enjoy, even though the subjects were inspiring.	
counselling & support at receiving university abroad	
I was able to get counselling because I was experiencing personal problems. This was organised very quickly after I asked for it and I appreciate we have done there very much. I felt at ease asking for help at the university.	
transfer of credits	
Credits have not yet been transferred but I expect this to be no problem as credit points are the same for UU and UA.	



STUDENT LIFE	
welcome & orientation programme	
<p>A very warm welcome and personal greeting. The exchange coordinators were even willing to drive me from the airport to my new apartment. We did an orientation hike and had a dinner at the university another night. It was easy to meet other exchange students which we saw very often throughout the semester.</p> <p>Local students were also very welcoming and love to meet new people. They have great recommendations for food and love to join going out or go hiking together.</p>	
accommodation	
<p>Housing is easy to find here. I recommend Marquee Apartments. Great location, pool, honest price which includes cleaning once a week, and a lot of fun and friendly people.</p>	
leisure & culture	
<p>Lots to do here. A lot of nature trips and museums to visit. A nice way to exercise is walking the stairs of the Hooiberg during sunrise or sunset. You can also run alongside the beach when it is not too warm. Evenings are filled with going to beach bars (Moomba, Bugaloe, Surfside) and afterwards going out (Gusto, Office, 7West). Food and alcohol is quite expensive, I spend more money on this than expected.</p>	
suggestions/tips	
<p>Arikok National Park (walking, take a local with you who knows the way, or rent a jeep)</p> <p>Hooiberg</p> <p>Aruba Aloe-museum</p> <p>Palm Island (50% discount when you show your student card)</p> <p>Renting quads</p> <p>Sushi or Chinese at Yami Yami</p> <p>Coffee or lunch at Dushi Delicious (such friendly people, they just opened up)</p> <p>Red Fish (cheaper and better fish than Zeerover)</p> <p>Cinema Gloria (VIP is very cheap and amazing chairs, bring a jacket)</p> <p>Getting your Open Water diving licence</p> <p>Diving along the coast to visit all beaches in one day</p>	

CONCLUSIONS	
would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain	
<p>Yes. I loved my time in Aruba and could stay here for many more semesters. The university is not as high in academic quality, but there are many important life experience to gather on this island. I choose Aruba because I wanted to experience living abroad in a country I would not normally visit, and because I love the tropical warmth. Classrooms were always very cold because of AC's so do bring long pants.</p>	
do you have any additional advice or comments?	
<p>Without a driver's licence it is very hard to come about on the island. I have managed to share a car with three other students who were following similar courses. Most people shared a car with one other.</p>	



Finally, choose a destination for the fact that it excites you. Studying abroad is the most amazing opportunity to be indulged in new cultures and countries.



2019-2020

PREPARATION	
exchange application process	
I have had to send a motivation letter and fill in a number of forms. I also had to choose a minor. Furthermore, I didn't have to do much.	
counselling & support at Utrecht University	
The guidance from Utrecht University was excellent. For example, they helped me in the beginning when contact with the University in Aruba did not go well.	
academic preparation	
To be able to follow the courses, no additional tests were required and no additional requirements were set.	
language preparation	
Spanish, Dutch, English and Papiamentu are spoken in Aruba. Papiamentu is a mix of many different languages. I can now reasonably understand Papiamentu because it contains many Dutch words. There is also a lot of Spanish in it. Almost all courses were taught in English at the University of Aruba. Since I had a good command of English, I had no problems with this.	
finances	
Many things are a lot more expensive in Aruba than they are in the Netherlands. Around me I saw that students lost a lot of money every month. I have arranged my adventure differently so that I lost less money per month. From 1000 euros a month I was able to make ends meet. Many students rent a car. Because the University, Oranjestad, shops and other important things were close by, I bought a bike mountain bike. This has saved me a lot of money and it was also a very nice way to explore the island! Apartments in Aruba can be expensive. The cheaper apartments are often full quickly. The groceries in Aruba are very expensive. Fruit and vegetables in particular are very pricey. For example, a courgette quickly costs 3 euros and a net of mandarins 6 euros. Fasfood, on the other hand, is a lot cheaper. For example, with the tacobell the cheapest menu is 3 euros.	

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD
study programme (content and organisational issues)
There is a big difference in teaching between the university in the Netherlands and the University in Aruba. In Aruba, for example, the classes are much smaller. I myself was in a class of 6 students. The attention students receive from teachers is therefore much greater. Teachers in Aruba seem to look more at the students. For example, when I wanted to write a piece about juvenile crime in Aruba for a committee in the Netherlands, I was also guided in this and teachers helped me, among other things, in contacting people / organizations. Teachers were also very flexible. When students wanted to change something in the scheduling, this was often okay for teachers. Sometimes things were not arranged well at the university. For example, if we had a failure, this was not communicated. It can also take a long time before schoolwork is checked.
academic quality of education activities



Fewer exams are given in Aruba than in the Netherlands. Generally, presentations, papers or quizzes are given in Aruba. Education is also more practical. During the time that I was in Aruba, I visited many companies. I really liked this. I did, however, find the level of education lower than in the Netherlands.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

Teachers in Aruba support students very well! Whenever I wanted to know something, I could always go to a teacher. This was very nice!

transfer of credits

I have received 30 credits for the minor.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

The university had only very late (a few days in advance) announced that there was an introduction program. Because of this I could not be here. I thought that was a great pity! A number of fellow students have been here and they indicated that they really enjoyed it.

accommodation

In Aruba the 2 largest landlords of apartments are Perle D'or and Blue Village. I myself have chosen Blue village. In retrospect, I am certainly happy with this choice. This is where most of the students are, so we often ate together and were able to do a lot of fun things. I have stayed in a single room for a few months and in a double room for a few months. The double rooms are fine. I found the single room less pleasant. There was more vermin, it didn't smell fresh and after a while it turned out that there was a lot of mold behind the kitchen. Because of this I got a double room for the same rate. Blue Village has 2 swimming pools which are very nice. However, it is recommended to ask for a room that is not at the pool. Students often hold parties (almost every day) around the swimming pool, making sleeping difficult.

leisure & culture

I found the culture in Aruba wonderful. The people are always friendly and they are very helpful. They also don't worry about anything. This has taught me personally to be able to put things in perspective. During my stay in Aruba I bought a mountain bike and I did not rent a car. I think this is highly recommended. On Aruba it is wonderful to cycle. There are not so much cycle paths but cyclists can easily cycle around the sidewalk. However, the traffic is somewhat unsafe and I have worn a helmet while cycling. I often cycled up the beaches, to the California Lighthouse. This is highly recommended! There are also mountain bike routes in the beautiful Arikok (national park). Sometimes (mostly on the weekend) I also went out with friends with a car. You can also go out in Aruba. Aruba is very safe during the day. Unfortunately, this is less the case when going out. I myself am no longer gone when I have seen some unpleasant things happening around me. Beach places are, according to me, safer (eg Bugalou).

suggestions/tips

Buy a mountain bike! This is a very nice way to explore the island and you save a lot of money.
It is also nice to go into the national park with a 4 wheel drive.

CONCLUSIONS

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



I definitely recommend Aruba as a destination. I learned a lot from the culture. I myself have learned to put things into perspective and to live less stressed. I find this very valuable.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

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PREPARATION

exchange application process

In preparation of the exchange I wrote an application letter and got in touch with the Exchange office of the UA to arrange the required papers such as proof of financial possibilities and a housing contract.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

Preparation by an universal exchange presentation, but this was a pilot year for the REBO faculty so there weren't much reviews. I also experienced a lack of information regarding studying at university of Aruba.

academic preparation

Minimal, there wasn't much information about the academic terms, I asked for a timetable but they told me I should use the one from last year.

language preparation

None

finances

See, exchange application process.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)

The program was interesting. The grading for exams was less strict compared to the one in the Netherlands, but the research had a bigger societal relevance. The island is so small that doing research for a hospital affects the people around me directly, this made research way more fun! Everybody was significantly more motivated compared to the research people I cooperated with in the Netherlands.

academic quality of education activities

The lectures weren't that good. The language in the classroom was mainly English but there were a lot of times the teacher started speaking Papiamentu (The native language, one I don't speak), if he/she didn't know the words in English.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

transfer of credits

Is still happening due to a resit.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

There was an introduction week, where you had the opportunity to meet other exchange students, most of them were Dutch, so I had a good connection with a lot of students in the first week. This week was a lot of partying and exploring the island via the eyes of a local. This was good fun!

accommodation



I stayed with friends from my parents, but a lot of the dutch students stayed at Aruba Blue Village, an awesome spot with good houses and some swimmingpools, perfect for pool parties!

leisure & culture

The Aruban culture was hospital and kind. If you would ran a flat tire (Which happened a lot because the infrastructure is a joke and you defenitely need a car because cycling is dangerous), people would genuinly come and help you out.

suggestions/tips

Rent a car at an official car rental, a lot of cars rented illegal don't have insurance and aren't checked regularly at a garage which is really dangerous. I once sat in a car from which the brakes suddenly stopped working.

CONCLUSIONS

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

Yes I would recommend it with the right amount of research, feel free to hit me up on my email for questions!

do you have any additional advice or comments?

One important piece of advice is save enough money. The island itself is really expensive. Everything is importated so costs at least 2 x more then in NL. A beer in a club can cost you 8 dollar. Bread 3 dollar etc. This is a good thing to keep in mind because I couldn't find a lot of information about this online. There are two or three official supermarkets who have trustworthy products, but there also are a lot of chinese supermarkets where you shouldn't buy 'fresh' products such as meet. This gets a lot of exchange students ill.

Save this UU report for your own records and send it as an e-mail attachment to ieo.leg@uu.nl within 30 days after finishing your study abroad period and in ANY case before the final deadline!