



## UU Study Abroad Report Form

	Contact info at the IO.
faculty/college	Science
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's
name study programme	Information Science

destination city & country	Toronto, Canada
name university abroad	University of Toronto, Mississauga
start date	01 / 09 / 2023 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	20 / 12 / 2023 (dd/mm/yyyy)

### PREPARATION

exchange application process	A bit of a hassle on the side of Toronto, however they were very quick and comprehensive when emailing them directly for help. Also note that quite a few money transfers have to be done before going / getting the Holland Scholarship grant, especially if you are planning to stay in residence. On the side of Utrecht everything was straight forward.
counselling & support at Utrecht University	The meetings with other students going to Canada was very nice to attend. The online meeting with someone that has already been to the university wasn't as useful, they didn't go to the campus I went to.
academic preparation	None
language preparation	If you're proficient in English then no preparation is necessary.
finances	The Holland Scholarship Grant is very useful and a nice amount to get (1250eu). However, do know that an exchange to Canada will be more expensive than most places in Europe.

### STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)	Since the native language is English, all courses are at a decent level. Also, almost all courses are available to choose from, so there is always something interesting to take.
academic quality of education activities	The professors are very knowledgeable, enthusiastic and good presenters. The lectures were better than what I'm used to at Utrecht. They are also readily available outside of class hours and open to discuss the material.
counselling & support at receiving university abroad	The inbound exchange committee was very helpful in answering any question that came up.
transfer of credits	



Pretty straight forward, make sure you do it on time. Also, ensure the UU exam commission has given the green light to your selected courses. This takes a while so do that as soon as you have selected your UofT courses. Then if they don't let you choose a course, you're still on time to change it at UofT. My courses were accepted first time around.

## STUDENT LIFE

### welcome & orientation programme

There is a orientation programme and it's a bit of fun, but the age difference between first years and us as incoming exchange students was quite big. Everything seemed childish. I used this time to make friends with the other exchange students, this is a smart move.

### accommodation

I lived on residence at UofT. I can't recommend it. The roommates were all first years and no one knows how to look after themselves, let alone the common spaces. If you're on residence you're forced to take the meal plan, however I was very unimpressed by the meal options. I managed to change the full package to a smaller package for upper years, however cooking yourself is much healthier, tastier and convenient. I don't recommend living on campus.

### leisure & culture

There is hardly any party culture. Especially on campus itself, there is nothing to do. In the city a bit more, but everything closes at 2 at night. Also the city is 45-75 minutes away from Mississauga depending on traffic. This makes it so that you won't go there for just a cup of coffee. Furthermore, the city doesn't have much to offer except the big attractions, CN tower, Museum, etc. There are no cute little shops, everything is very capitalistic and commercial, everything is a franchise. Mississauga itself has absolutely no night life, and also no attraction worth visiting. Just suburbs and a big shopping mall.

### suggestions/tips

## CONCLUSIONS

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

No, unfortunately I can't recommend going here. The reality was much lower than my expectations. There is hardly anything to do, especially in Mississauga. If you really want to go, definitely go to the down town campus and live in the city. There are very few exchange students which means not many people you can relate to or make friends with. Compare this to a city like Rome for instance, they have massive exchange/international student organisations that organize multiple events, parties, trips each week. If I knew what I know now, then when choosing my destination for an exchange, I would not have gone to Canada at all.

### do you have any additional advice or comments?



## UU Study Abroad Report Form

	Contact info at the IO
faculty/college	Faculty of Social Sciences
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's
name study programme	Psychology

destination city & country	Toronto, Canada
name university abroad	University of Toronto
start date	07 / 09 / 2023 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	20 / 12 / 2023 (dd/mm/yyyy)

### PREPARATION

#### exchange application process

The exchange application can be a long and tedious process. There are a lot of documents and things you need to take care off before you can step on the plane to Canada. For example, I had to write multiple motivation letters, as well as list every course I've taken before with descriptions. Moreover, UofT has their own application process. However, everything you must do is clearly stated on the UU website or explained by UofT. It was easy to follow, and I had zero issues. Also, don't let this discourage you, just be aware that you need some time to complete all the steps.

#### counselling & support at Utrecht University

The International Office at UU is amazing! They are happy to help you with any questions or issues. There are plenty of opportunities to talk to someone f2f. There is also a pre-departure meeting to help you get started. Do not hesitate to contact them with any questions, they have been through this many times and know everything there is to know about the exchange process.

#### academic preparation

I did not really prepare myself academically. I was a 4<sup>th</sup> year student and had a good idea of what I could expect from Psychology courses. Indeed, all the courses I did at UofT were Psychology courses and somewhat resembled Psychology courses you will get at UU.

#### language preparation

As a UU Bachelor student you don't need to prove your language proficiency with any tests such as the TOEFL. I've also had years of experience reading English texts and talking to international friends. Therefore, I was confident enough in my English to not have to practice beforehand. I did find writing in English a bit challenging sometimes. So, if you want to prepare yourself, I suggest practicing that.

#### finances

I spend the months before my exchange saving up money from work and end up saving up about €4000. Furthermore, I applied for *uitwonende basisbeurs* from the government. Because you are living abroad and



can use public transport (OV), you are eligible for compensation. Together this totals up to about €500 a month which is quite a lot. However, you must apply for this yourself and it was quite a hassle because they just reinstated this policy again in 2023-2024. The current system was not designed for exchange students, so DUO was confused about my position, and I had to write a lengthy appeal to one of their decisions. I hope by the time you are going on exchange; you won't have to experience such problems.

The rent of my room was about a 1050 CAD or €750, and I spent about €700 a month on food, groceries, activities, laundry etc etc. In total, I spend about €5800. With the money I saved up, the holland scholarship, and the *basisbeurs* I was lucky to receive every month, I was more than able to afford my stay there. I also ate out a lot, and you can probably do with less money a month. Although CAD is cheaper (€1 = 1,46 CAD), just bear in mind that Toronto is a very expensive city. I spend countless hours complaining with my roommates about the prices.

### STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

#### study programme (content and organisational issues)

I applied for 5 courses at the start, but I wasn't accepted into one of them because of lack of pre-requisites. So, I end up doing 4 courses instead. Halfway the semester I dropped another one, because it wasn't up to academic standards. At UofT, the profs have a lot of freedom in choosing what they teach. This means that the quality of each course is dependent on who teaches it. However, the course I dropped was definitely an outlier. Overall, I found all my courses to be highly interesting and captivating.

#### academic quality of education activities

The big difference between courses at UU and UofT is the length. At UU you follow 2 courses per period for about 8 weeks. A full course load at UofT is 5 courses for about 16 weeks. The difficulty is about the same, but you have to do a lot more assignments and tests. Since you do more courses at the same time, the workload can be difficult to manage. Though if you take your course work seriously, it is very manageable. Like I previously mentioned, the quality and difficulty are dependent on the professor. I had an amazing course about personality with engaging content. My other two courses were Social Psychology of Emotion and Positive Psychology. These were a bit uninspired because it was mostly about memorization.

#### counselling & support at receiving university abroad

One of the best things at UofT are the office hours. Each prof has office hours, where you can stop by to ask questions or just chat. I recommend making use of it, because it allows you to connect with your profs and they can guide you with course work. It is fun to chat to very knowledgeable people about subjects you are both passionate about.

The International Office of Toronto also provides support when needed. They were very kind and helpful throughout my stay. If you have any questions, don't hesitate to contact them.

#### transfer of credits

I was able to transfer all of the courses I did. It took a few weeks of emailing back and forth. They only email your transcript of records for free about 1.5 months after your exchange. Eventually I conceded and just paid a \$18 fee and got my transcript of records emailed to UU almost instantly. All parties were incredibly helpful. I had no problems of transferring my credits because I had permission beforehand.



## STUDENT LIFE

### welcome & orientation programme

The orientation at UofT is very minimal. I had one meeting with other exchange students where some general information was given about support and systems at UofT. You really have to be proactive to meet other students. If you just go out there and talk to people, you make friends quite easily. There are hundreds of clubs and student associations if you're interested in joining that.

### accommodation

I lived at Tartu College Student residency. It is right on the edge of St. George campus, in the middle of the city. I had my own room, and we shared a living room/kitchen. We also shared 2 bathrooms and 1 toilet (or as the Canadians say: washroom) I lived with 5 other flatmates. We had a cleaner who cleaned our apartment every week. For a student residency, this felt quite luxurious. There is also a laundry room on the top floor. I had an amazing view on the CN Tower and downtown. The staff consisted mostly of other students who were living there as well. The front desk is happy to help if you have any issues. On the ground level there is the masters buffeteria. They offer great meals at affordable prices. I made use of that quite a lot, and at the end I bonded with the owner (so I got some free stuff ☺).

One of the great benefits of Tartu is that it's full of full-time and exchange students. They offer events like parties, movie nights, study nights, game nights and so on. It is quite popular and for good reason. I 100% recommend choosing this as your housing. Make sure you apply as soon as the applications are open. This is very important!!! A lot of students that I talked to who wanted to stay at Tartu couldn't, because they were too late.

### leisure & culture

Toronto is very big and vibrant city. There are a lot of frat houses if you like parties. On college St. there are plenty of clubs and bars. I enjoyed going for long walks on Toronto Island with friends and roommates. Places like the distillery district are definitely worth a visit. I'm a big fan of baseball, so I went to a couple of Blue Jay games. In any case, there are plenty of activities you can do if you want to relax.

On campus there are about 50 libraries you can go to. Some of the buildings look quite old so you feel like you are wandering on Hogwarts. I enjoyed exploring campus and finding new favourite study spots.

The culture isn't that far off Dutch culture. Make sure to familiarize yourself with the greeting "Hi, how are you?" to anyone you meet. Don't answer it though because it's just a greeting. Most people are very kind and helpful.

### suggestions/tips

My number one tip is: Apply for Tartu or other student residencies as soon as the applications are open!!

When I was choosing an exchange destination, I read about this in one of the other study abroad reports. It has saved me and made my exchange an unforgettable experience!!

## CONCLUSIONS



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

I would definitely recommend this destination. I recommend the St. George campus since it's in the middle of the city so you can really envelop yourself in the big city. The north American campus and high-quality education makes for a unique experience. It is valuable to get a different perspective on academic education, especially in a good university like the University of Toronto.

I would also recommend Tartu College residency. They made me feel at home and they organize plenty of activities. It only took me about 10min to walk to my classes.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

I'll say it again; apply for Tartu college residency in time!! For the upcoming year this is the 15<sup>th</sup> of April!!

Also make sure you go for a long walk on Toronto Island. It's about \$9 for the ferry. It's nice to escape the busy city from time to time.

My last tip is to be proactive and talk to people. This is the best way to make friends. Before you know it, you have plenty of people you can study with or do fun activities with!



# UU Study Abroad Report Form

	Contact info at the IO.
faculty/college	Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's
name study programme	Sociology

destination city & country	Toronto, Canada
name university abroad	University of Toronto
222222222222start date	02 / 09 / 2023 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	08 / 01 / 2024 (dd/mm/yyyy)

## PREPARATION

### exchange application process

I found the instructions for applying for a semester abroad pretty clear, both from UU and U of T. The steps you need to follow are clearly outlined. The Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences provides an exchange manual with a checklist included, which was really useful during my application process and preparation. Everything you need to arrange before leaving abroad is in there, so it prevents you from forgetting and overlooking useful tips. Moreover, U of T sent PowerPoint slides with the complete instruction how to apply for the university and how to enrol for courses. If you just follow the steps, then it will show itself. Altogether, I did not experience any problems with the application process.

### counselling & support at Utrecht University

You always have the opportunity to contact your International Officer with any questions you have. When you are earlier in the process of orienting your destination of preference, the Study Abroad Weeks are very useful to make a start with your exchange; the International Offices provide students with a lot of tips about how to choose a destination, about finance and about practical matters you should take into account. I went to Canada in September and in April before that, we had a meeting with all the exchange students going to Canada. During that session, we got some more tips specifically focused on Canada, so I would recommend going to that session.

### academic preparation

I study Sociology and at U of T, I also followed solely Sociology courses. For some courses I wanted to follow at U of T, there were requisites in terms of prior knowledge/credits earned, but since I passed all my compulsory Sociology courses at UU, I had enough credits to enrol for the courses I wanted to take. Therefore, I did not have to do any special preparation before going to U of T.

### language preparation

At U of T, the guiding language in classes is English. As a Dutch bachelor's student, you are expected to speak English well enough to take classes at an academic level. Therefore, you do not have to take any sort of test to prove your English; in other words, there is no special language preparation needed for Dutch bachelor's students. But of course you can always try to improve your English before leaving to Canada, for example by listening to English music and podcasts, reading English books and watching English movies/series. For me, speaking was the most difficult language skill, because I do not do that everyday, whereas I do listen to English, read in English and write in English (almost) everyday. But since you will speak a lot of English there, you will notice that your English speaking and pronunciation will improve.

### finances



I would recommend to make an overview with how much money you are planning to spend during your time abroad on the one hand and your income on the other hand. In this way, you can calculate how much money you need to save/set aside to do everything you want to during your exchange.

### STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

#### study programme (content and organisational issues)

I followed four courses: Sociology of Hip Hop; Race, Class, and Gender; Social Control; Sexuality and Modernity. I found the content of all four extremely interesting. Something that was quite different from U of T is the organization of classes; I only had lectures – no workshops/tutorials of any kind. On the other hand, the teachers encouraged the students to have interactive lectures with a lot of discussions. Consequently, more students raise their hand in a U of T lecture hall than in a UU lecture hall and more large-scale discussions are created. In general, the teachers are really engaged with their students and are open to different perceptions and their students’ feedback and opinion.

At U of T, you have to follow more courses at once than at UU (three to five max), so you have to get used to a different kind of time management; you have to divide your attention between multiple, different courses. So it is essential that you keep up with the readings and deadlines. But as long as you do that, it is definitely doable to pass all your courses.

At UU, I am used to doing a lot of group assignments, but at U of T, everything is a bit more individualized. I only had one group assignment, which was a presentation. I found this quite nice, because I could arrange my time as I wanted. On the other hand, this also makes it more difficult to meet other classmates than when you are in a small-scale class.

#### academic quality of education activities

The teachers are competent in their field and they transmit this while teaching, which makes the lectures interesting. The types of assignment and tests I had to do were diversified – take-home tests, in-class tests, a creative writing assignment, summaries, a presentation and a dancing-video assignment. Personally, it was nice to do something else than just writing papers.

#### counselling & support at receiving university abroad

Personally, I did not reach out much to the Centre for International Experience for support, because everything concerning practical matters was quite clear, but so there is the CIE, which offers programs and services to support international students. For example, there are Q&A sessions about immigration, legality and documents, there is help with regard to health insurance, but the center also organized various social activities for international students to get to know each other. University wide, there are a lot of programs that support internationals, minority students, vulnerable students.

#### transfer of credits

At the time of writing, I am still in the process of getting my credits transferred from U of T to my home institution. The CIE at U of T prepared my transcript, so I handed in a request to get that transcript sent to the International Office at UU. Now I have to wait until the International Office accepts the transcript so I can send it to the Board of Examiners. I hope this process will proceed smoothly, but I cannot tell much more about it at this point.

### STUDENT LIFE

#### welcome & orientation programme

U of T does not have an introduction week for new (international) students, unfortunately. I wish there had been some sort of fun, social activity to get to know your classmates outside the classroom in an informal way. I only had to pick up my student card and attend an information session for international students.

#### accommodation





I was lucky enough to get into a student residence on my first try. I lived in Tartu College (<https://www.tartucollege.ca/>). I would definitely recommend to start searching for housing early. The applications for the fall term at Tartu start in April. Tartu's location is great! St. George campus is walkable and it is next to the subway stations Spadina and St. George. I also know some people who got housing via Facebook or Airbnb. Keep in mind that Toronto is expensive, so expect to pay more rent than in Utrecht.

#### leisure & culture

Toronto is a big city, so there are so many cool things to do! Toronto is incredibly diverse when it comes to people and cultures, so make sure to check out the different shops and restaurants near Dundas Street, in Kensington Market, in Koreatown and Chinatown. You can literally eat and shop around the globe in Toronto! There are various museums (ROM is free for students on Tuesdays; Art Gallery of Ontario is a must visit as well), you can buy cheap coffee on every street corner at Tim Hortons, there are some nice (student) bars at Queen Street and College Street. When you are in Canada, you must see a hockey game. I would definitely recommend going to a Maple Leafs game (it is not cheap), on top of that, as a U of T student, you have free access to all the university sports games.

In general, Canadian people are really friendly and always willing to help if you have a question. Do not be afraid to approach people!

#### suggestions/tips

Go out of the city and make some trips as well! I went to Montreal and Quebec, which was amazing and really different from Toronto. Canada is famous for its nature of course, so try to visit a national park in October, when the leaves turn into beautiful fall colors (Algonquin Provincial Park is just a few hours bus drive from Toronto).

Additional tips in Toronto:

Sightseeing/activities:

- Visit the CN Tower – the view is incredible
- Graffiti Alley
- Go skating at Nathan Phillips Square in the winter
- Visit the Toronto Islands and watch the sunset and skyline
- Gooderham Building
- Casa Loma
- High Park – especially during fall with those beautiful colors
- Kensington Market
- Distillery District – there is a Christmas market in December
- Canada's Wonderland – so many rollercoasters
- Walk along Harbourfront

Night out/bars/food:

- Rent a private karaoke room in Koreatown
- Landwer Cafe – brunch
- Pigeon – brunch
- Smoke's Poutinerie – poutine
- BeaverTails
- Warehouse – bar
- 3 Brewers – bar
- Drom Taberna – bar
- Sneaky Dee's – bar
- Red Room – bar
- Madison Avenue Pub – bar



## CONCLUSIONS

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

Yes, Toronto is a great city, the campus is great, has some beautiful Harry Potter-kind of buildings and has a lot of facilities. The teachers at U of T are both knowledgeable and approachable. Finally, people are willing to help you, both from inside and outside of the university

do you have any additional advice or comments?

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## UU Study Abroad Report Form

Contact info available at the IO.

faculty/college	Faculty of Science
level	<input type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> master's
name study programme	Computing Science

destination city & country	Toronto, Canada
name university abroad	University of Toronto Scarborough
start date	01 / 09 / 2023 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	12 / 12 / 2023 (dd/mm/yyyy)

<b>PREPARATION</b>	
exchange application process	<p>The application to the exchange is relatively easy. The main problems come from finding the right subjects. The Toronto University site is quite vague and a lot of subjects are either in the wrong semester/take a full year. When looking for subjects, make sure that you have the right semester and take the prerequisites into account. Note that unlike Utrecht, Toronto has a summer, fall and winter semester. Exchanges are usually either in the fall or winter semester.</p> <p>After finding the right subjects, you have to put these subjects into a study plan and get this approved by your program coordinator. You also have to write a motivation statement.</p> <p>After completing the application at Utrecht, you have to complete a similar application for the University of Toronto. This consists of collecting a number of different documents like an overview of all previously completed subjects and a transcript of previous courses.</p>
counselling & support at Utrecht University	<p>The university provides a lot of useful information at the start of your exchange. I would definitely go to the meeting with a student that has done or is currently doing the exchange, as well as the presentation on Canada organised by the international office. The international office will send you emails with all information. As long as you write down all important dates as you get them, the process will go smoothly.</p>
academic preparation	<p>I didn't have to do anything academic preparation.</p>
language preparation	<p>Of course Toronto is an English speaking city. If you do masters subjects, you need to do an English test. You have to find a suitable test on your own. For bachelors students this isn't necessary.</p>
Finances	<p>Toronto is expensive. €700 for a small room is cheap. You will spend about twice as much on groceries as back home. Flights are about €900 for a return ticket.</p> <p>To compensate for this, there are a few things you can get. 1. Holland scholarship. This is a scholarship for any student that goes on an exchange to Toronto or a university in Hong Kong. You get a onetime payment of €1250.</p>



2. Public transport compensation from DUO. If you have free public transport in the Netherlands, you are eligible for a compensation of about €120 monthly from DUO. On the DUO site, you have to exchange your student travel product for a international compensation for the duration of your exchange.

As an additional tip, a lot of people used the ‘too good to go’ app to get cheap food. I did this a few times as well and was pleasantly surprised by the amount of food I got for little money.

Finally don’t forget to get a credit card if you don’t have one. Many people use either a credit card from their bank, Revolut credit cards or Bunq credit cards. Getting a card through your bank may take multiple weeks. A caveat with the last two is that you might not be able to rent a car using these credit cards. You won’t need a car as long as you are in Toronto, but it can be useful when visiting other cities.

### STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

#### study programme (content and organisational issues)

Because I had already finished my program at home, I did a number of subjects that differ from my normal program. For this reason, I can’t really speak on the differences in content. Overall, organising the subjects was really easy. The hardest part is deciding what subjects to do in combination with your study program in Utrecht.

Once in Toronto, you receive an email from the Toronto international office where you can not only tell them what subjects you want to do, but also at what time you want to do them. Most subjects have multiple possible timeslots and you get a free choice of timeslots. This way, you can for instance place all your classes on 3 days and have 2 extra days off each week.

#### academic quality of education activities

Toronto is ranked really high on all of the University rankings. I did not notice a significant difference in the quality at all. The main differences you’re going to see: The workload is high. You’ll have to hand-in a lot of exercises throughout the semester. The subjects aren’t difficult. In fact, they were significantly easier than my subjects in Utrecht.

#### counselling & support at receiving university abroad

The Toronto exchange office will provide an introduction meeting at the start of the semester. They will continuously remind you of upcoming deadlines when it comes to payment/enrolment. Other than that, the Toronto Exchange office is very helpful. Don’t hesitate to mail them about anything loosely related to the university, Toronto or even Canada. They also usually have at least one student in your program that can provide you with program specific information.

#### transfer of credits

For me this wasn’t relevant, but if you want to transfer your credits, you need your course to be approved by the board of examiners. You don’t get your grades transferred, all courses are noted as either a pass or a fail. This means that getting a 60% is exactly the same as getting a 95%.

### STUDENT LIFE

#### welcome & orientation programme

In the fall semester, the Scarborough campus organises introductions for international students. You have to register for this introduction. Do this as soon as you get the email. This year, the introduction was full quite early. If you weren’t registered, you could still join, but got different food. After the introduction for all international students, there was an introduction specifically for exchange students. Here you can meet the



other exchange students and learn information only relevant to exchange students. This is also a great place to network and set up WhatsApp groups with other exchange students. They are in the same situation as you and often want to do the same activities as you.

The exchange office also organises a bunch of different activities throughout the semester. Activities such as: going to Niagara Falls, visiting a pumpkin patch and an internationals barbeque.

#### accommodation

The university of Toronto has three campuses. The St. George campus in the city centre, and the Scarborough and Mississauga campuses on both sides of Toronto further from the centre.

Even though I studied on the Scarborough campus, I chose to live in the city centre. I can advise anyone who goes to study on the Scarborough campus to do the same. From students that lived at the student accommodations at Scarborough, I heard that the campus was very quiet and empty on the weekends.

I lived in the Tartu College building on 310 Bloor street west ([tartucollege.ca](http://tartucollege.ca)). It is situated right on the St. George campus in downtown Toronto. There are a lot of advantages to this building. It's cheap, relative to other accommodations in Toronto. You have direct access to both subway lines (north-south and east-west). You get a shared apartment of 5 people, usually with at least one other exchange student and cleaning is included. The building regularly organises events to get to know people in the building. There are a large number of decent bars and restaurants in the same street.

At the same time, there are some downsides: By far the biggest downside is the construction on one side of the building. This construction starts at 7 in the morning on weekdays and makes a lot of noise. The construction will continue until 2025 at least. With closed windows you can sleep through it, but it is still bad. The rooms are the bare minimum when it comes to size/bed/kitchen appliances. If you're unlucky, you have to buy your own pans and utensils. Also, Toronto students are pretty introverted relative to Dutch ones. I had 2 roommates from Italy that I actually spoke a lot with, the other roommates didn't really interact a lot with me or each other. I heard similar experiences from other students that lived in Tartu.

Regardless of these downsides, if I had to choose again, I would still choose to live in Tartu. If you want to do the same, the enrolment for the fall semester starts in April. You won't have all of the necessary documents at the start. For any document you don't have, just submit an equivalent one from Utrecht. In my semester, 4 students got into Tartu this way.

Now don't get me wrong, travelling to the Scarborough campus takes a long time. About an hour with the subway and bus. However, when you live on the campus, you have to take the same trip any time you want to do something fun in the city centre. For about €90 per month, you can buy a student-monthly pass that gives you free access to the TTC (Toronto public transport). You can use the travel compensation from Duo to pay for this. An additional advantage of having the monthly pass is that you will feel much more free taking public transport throughout the day. If you want to go to a store one subway stop over, you don't have to think about the money. I ended up using the subway *a lot*. Usually multiple times a day.

#### leisure & culture

As an international student, it is up to you to organise as many leisure activities as you want/can. First off, you should try to be a tourist as well as a student. Throughout the semester, there are a ton of opportunities to go to Montreal, Algonquin park or any of the other cities nearby. You get one week off in the middle of the semester, the reading week. This week is perfect to take a longer trip to some city nearby. A lot of students choose to go to New York in this week, as that is only a 2 hour flight away. Note that the reading week can be at different dates for different campuses. In my semester, the reading week for Scarborough and Mississauga were in October, while the St. George reading week was in November.



Going to Niagara Falls is a great day trip. At the Scarborough campus, they sometimes organise a trip to Niagara, otherwise there are cheap weekend GO train tickets to visit the Niagara falls. The city of Niagara isn't great so I would not go there for more than a day.

In the city of Toronto, there are also a large number of activities that you can do. First of all there are sports matches. You can go to MLB (baseball), NHL (ice hockey) or NBA (basketball) matches. The NHL and NBA games are the most fun in my opinion, but also very expensive. Sometimes it helps to wait with buying tickets until seconds before the match starts. Baseball is cheap and also still worth it, although much more boring than the other sports. The season ends in October however, so you'll have to go in the first few weeks. I personally follow the NFL and went to a game, but you'll have to travel to the US for this. I won't go into this further as there aren't many people who follow the NFL, but if you also want to travel to a game, feel free to send me a message for more information. Besides the professional sports matches, there are also college sport matches by the Toronto Varsity teams. These matches are free to attend for students and it's definitely worth it to go to the Hockey and American Football matches at least once. The hockey matches are significantly more fun in my opinion.

When it comes to the other activities in Toronto, I'd recommend looking at TodoToronto.com at least once a week and following student accounts that post activities. In the first weeks of the fall semester it is still warm enough to swim at Toronto Islands. You also get a nice view of the Toronto skyline at sundown here. The Toronto film festival is also in these first weeks. If you're a cinema fan, this is a great event. Finally, most museums are free for people under 25, or free on one day of the week. I went to the Royal Ontario Museum and the Art Gallery of Ontario.

The nightlife in Toronto is very different from Utrecht. The clubs are expensive (\$25 just to get in) and often quite empty. The best way to get to decent clubs is to follow recommendations from locals. Besides clubs, there are some bars near King street that are fun. At the start of the semester, the frat houses also organise parties. It's definitely worth it to go to at least one of these. The average age at the frat parties is quite young though, close to 19/20.

The university of Toronto offers many sport activities that are free to join for any student at any campus. You can use one of the 3 gyms downtown, go to the 2 swimming pools or the indoor track, but they also offer a range of "drop-in" sports where you can do your favourite sport with a bunch of Canadian students. I chose to play drop-in ice hockey at the varsity centre. This was a great way to get some extra contacts outside of the other exchange students/students from my study program.

Besides sports, there are also a huge range of different clubs. Some people I knew joined the outdoors club, which organised trips to nearby nature parks, but there is a club for almost every subject imaginable.

suggestions/tips

I have included all tips above.

## CONCLUSIONS

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

I would definitely recommend Toronto to others. Toronto is perfect if you want to discover a culture that is very different from the Netherlands, without the chaos that comes from the US. It is a massive metropolis, different from any city in the Netherlands. The university provides everything you'd want in a university.



There is a reason that non-exchange internationals pay \$60.000 a year to study here. Besides the university, the city is welcoming and always hosts some sort of event.

Canada as a whole is a beautiful country with many different subcultures. Montreal is completely different from Toronto, which is again completely different from Ottawa. The national parks are unlike anything I have seen in Europe. It is a great mix of leisure time and study opportunities.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

I came to Toronto a week early (29<sup>th</sup> of August) and got to be a tourist for a week. I also got to settle into life in Toronto before classes started. I took care of things like bus passes early as well. Other students chose to arrive later. They still got all of the necessary things done before starting, but were probably more stressed than me.

There is a University of Toronto exchange Facebook group. Joining this group is very useful. Especially before arrival in Toronto, there is usually a lot of information. Students also organise Whatsapp groups and share events.

When packing your suitcase, buy vacuum bags. Vacuum bags are bags that you put inside your suitcase. After putting your clothes into the vacuum bag, you can vacuum all the air out of the bag. This basically doubles the storage space in your suitcase.

Finally, if you're really into nature, while there are some big parks in Toronto, the real nature parks are still a few hours away. Apparently in cities on the east coast like Vancouver, the nature is much closer to the city.



## UU Study Abroad Report Form

	Contact info available at the IO.
faculty/college	Humanities
level	<input type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> master's
name study programme	Comparative Literary Studies

destination city & country	Toronto, Canada
name university abroad	University of Toronto
start date	01 / 09 / 2022
end date	31 / 12 / 2022

### PREPARATION

#### exchange application process

I'm not exactly sure how this compares to application procedures to other universities, but the process for Toronto was quite long and stressful. The initial UU selection part was fine and pretty straightforward (it happens in semester 1 already, so start thinking and researching early), but once UU let us know we were selected to apply, we only had a few days to get everything in order, so that was quite stressful. We had to send a full second application to UofT itself, so make sure you have things like reference letters already sorted out. It's also good to know that UofT only accepts IELTS or TOEFL tests as proof of English proficiency, and there are very few exceptions to their rules (the Netherlands isn't one of them, unless you are a native speaker of English), and only an exchange on Bachelor level allows for Duolingo as proof. Once this application was handed in, it took very (too) long for UofT to let us know whether we were accepted. I only heard in June. So while this might be a bit nerve wracking, make sure you start sorting things out already. I hadn't booked my flight yet because it wasn't certain I could go, many people did already, but I still managed to get an OK deal, but this is something you'd have to decide for yourself. Also, don't underestimate the amount of stuff you need to take care of to actually go to Canada, such as finding housing, getting a credit card/Canadian bank account, arranging your health insurance with UofT, getting reisvergoeding if you're a Dutch student, finding a good phone plan so you can use data in Canada (phone plans are quite expensive there), etc.

#### counselling & support at Utrecht University

I didn't reach out to UU often personally, and when I did I always got helpful answers, but they are not always the quickest to reply, so make sure to take this into consideration. As I mentioned before, we only had a few days to prepare UofT's separate application, which was stressful, but ended up turning out okay. The exchange office was definitely helpful, so don't hesitate to reach out to them, it's always better to be sure about the process (especially UofT is strict with things like deadlines).

#### academic preparation

I was finishing up the first year of my Master's right up till when I flew to Canada, so there wasn't really any additional preparation for me. Practically though, UofT has a lot of different course lists, so check it all out to get an idea, but also make sure you look at the correct lists of courses that will actually be taught the semester you're there (the website can be a bit of a maze). Googling your department name and "course list" will already help. Schedule changes can occur quite late. It is possible to take courses in other departments as well (it was for me at least, this might depend on your department), but in my case courses filled up really fast, so it's smart to sign up for everything in advance. I think I signed up for my courses in June. If they're already full, usually you email both the professor of the course and the coordinator of the department. It's





okay to send your professor a message already to ask questions or show your desire to be in their course, this is normal there and maybe even smart.

language preparation

I'm used to studying and living in English, so I didn't have any additional prep. If you're not used to using English outside of an academic setting however, it might make you a bit more comfortable to also practice having regular conversations in English. I did have to take an IELTS unfortunately, so if you know you are not an exception, which you probably aren't if you're not a native speaker, plan this well in advance. You will only have a short amount of time to get your documents in to UofT after UU nominates you.

finances

I received a grant from the Holland Scholarship (UU will let you know how and when to apply for this). There weren't many other scholarships available to me (Dutch student), and those that might have been available required proof of admission at the start of Spring, but I didn't get accepted by UofT until June. If it's the same for you, there is thus a decent chance you won't be able to get much outside help, so it will be up to you to figure out your finances. Rent is very high in Toronto, so that will be a major expense, and some activities and food will also be expensive, but you can limit this by shopping at places like Dollarama and NoFrills, and buying smartly. Remember that tax doesn't show up till you're at the register, so you always pay more than expected. Another expense is tipping culture in Toronto: you're always expected to tip at least 15-20% when out, so this is something to take into consideration as well.

**STUDY ABROAD PERIOD**

study programme (content and organisational issues)

I was officially part of the Comparative Literature department, but only took one course there and took my other three at the English department. Everything was very organized, staff were very helpful, and so it was easy to figure out how to sign up for everything. UofT is big on mailing lists, so any topic you're interested in, there will probably be a club/centre about it and you can be notified of their events through there. When I was there, they organized a club fair during introduction period: definitely go there! The only organizational issue I had was that some departments store their information differently, so I couldn't figure out where my English classes were at before I knew where to look. So keep your eyes open for this and don't hesitate to contact your professors if you have questions.

academic quality of education activities

I really enjoyed my classes. The professors were incredibly knowledgeable and well-read, but very open and supportive as well. My classes were mainly discussions where we sat at round tables. The students mainly dictated the course of discussion, so we could explore our interests, and it always felt more like a conversation than a hierarchical symposium. Students were much more outspoken and confident than I was used to, which made for very vibrant discussions, and I learned a great deal of new things. Everyone was very approachable, so both academic quality and the vibe in the classrooms were great. It was also clear that more was expected of me than what I was used to: you will be expected to actively engage with the class discussion. While in my experience at UU it is more accepted to not speak as much, and we stick more closely to the material at hand and the professor's specific expertise, at UofT you are expected to have mastered the material on your own and we immediately go beyond it, a process to which you will be expected to contribute every class.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

I didn't make use of any of this, but there were many information points, online resources, and flyers that could have shown me where to get support. I can't say anything about the quality this support would have, but UofT does very clearly show where you can get support, and it has many different types on offer.

transfer of credits



I'm still in this process. I just had to fill out a form to get UofT to send my grades to UU, which went very smoothly. Now I still need to contact the Examboard, so I can't say anything yet about that side of the process. Since I followed courses that are the same or similar to the courses I sent with my UU application, and which were approved by my course coordinator, I don't expect much trouble. So if you do something radically different than scheduled, maybe check with your coordinator to be sure, but probably it will all be fine.

### STUDENT LIFE

#### welcome & orientation programme

I think this is more a product of being a Master student and not having a specific college (like BA and residential students do), but there was not much of a welcome program. We only had an academic fair and resource market in one day, with a sort of welcome talk and question hour, which was nice. I also attended the club fair which I discovered through friends/social media. There were no social introduction activities for us specifically. At UofT, for Master's at least, most programs organize their own department introduction as well. For me this again had an academic focus.

#### accommodation

Accommodation in Toronto is hard to find and expensive, so start early, and beware of scams!! There are many scammers out there. As for University housing, there are only a couple options for graduate students. Most viable would be Graduate House and Tartu College, but the waitlists are very long. You should sign up as soon as you can, even if you have not officially been accepted yet. There are also things like Facebook groups for off-campus housing, which can work, but beware scammers. There are certain red flags you can watch out for, and always make sure to have video/phone call to get a sense of the place and renter. Many people also use Airbnb. I was going to rent via Airbnb too, but was offered a room by the landlord on there. This one had been posted on Craigslist (which is usually known to be a bit sketchy), and I was a bit nervous until I actually saw the place when I got to Toronto, but everything turned out to be more than okay. Make sure to at least call with your landlord, see how the communication between you is, and make sure they don't ask you for anything like security deposits, these are illegal in Ontario. Also, check the address on Google Maps Streetview.

#### leisure & culture

The club fair I mentioned before is a great way to meet people who are into the same things as you are, and to do these activities regularly. There are clubs for pretty much everything. The university is also big on sports, and games are free for students, so I really recommend going, it will make for a very fun night out with friends, and you will feel very much like a UofT student and get a whiff of the Canadian love for hockey. The Center for International Experience also organizes many both fun and useful (practical) events where you can get help and meet other international students. Toronto itself also has much to offer: there are plenty of events that are hosted throughout the year, there are many nice places in and outside of the city, there are a lot of food options, and even just walking around Toronto can be really nice. There is something to do basically every weekend. I'd recommend going to a sports game like at Rogers Center because the vibe is really great, going to the lakefront and Toronto Islands at least once, there are many nice pubs, ice skating at Nathan Philips Square in the winter, and there are lots of niche stores and clubs (like a fantasy bookstore and a country club with a mechanical bull). There's the TIFF, the author festival, I went to a Rodeo as well, and of course there are places like Niagara Falls which are really accessible by train. Toronto also has lots of cinemas that show older movies, which could be really fun, and there are also nice markets and shopping districts. Really just walk around and you will find fun things to do.

#### suggestions/tips

Say yes to things/invites :) And try to get out of the city too. I joined the Outdoor club for example and went on a cabin trip one weekend and a stargazing trip another; Canada is absolutely beautiful, and you will see



things you'd never see in the Netherlands. Plus it's a nice way to meet new people, and if you enjoy things like canoeing and hiking, you can definitely do a lot of that here. Make sure to go during fall as well to see the beautiful fall foliage, Ontario is famous for it.

## CONCLUSIONS

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

YES! I had a wonderful time in Toronto. I learned so much at UofT, my classes were amazing and invaluable and I think the academic culture there pushed me out of my comfort zone in a very good way and I could really explore my interests here. UofT also organizes so many activities, both social and academic ones, there are so many things to explore, it feels like a bustling place of endless possibilities. The city itself was also really fun to live in: there are so many things to do with friends, and if you enjoy traveling, there are many cool destinations nearby. Canada is beautiful and I felt really at home there, so I would highly recommend going there.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

Don't underestimate the preparation required to go to Toronto. Have so much fun there, time will fly by, and make sure to get out of the city too!



## UU Study Abroad Report Form

	Contact info available at the IO.
faculty/college	Geosciences
level	bachelor's
name study programme	Natuurwetenschap & Innovatiemanagement

destination city & country	Toronto, Canada
name university abroad	University of Toronto
start date	01 / 09 / 2022
end date	20 / 12 / 2022

### PREPARATION

#### exchange application process

Before applying, I started looking at which destinations I could go to (in regard to GPA, language, COVID, and so on). After creating an overview of my possibilities, I started looking at which countries really appealed to me and whether experiences (and ratings) about their university were positive or not. After doing this, I remained with a handful of universities I really wanted to go to and contacted some people who went there to share their experiences.

#### counselling & support at Utrecht University

Support from Utrecht University was decent, but certainly not perfect. In general, your questions will be answered but it could take some time. Also, some points remained vague and could be explained a bit better.

#### academic preparation

The only academic preparation I have done was securing that my GPA remained above a 7 as I already knew that some Universities would only accept exchange students with a GPA higher than a certain amount.

#### language preparation

As Dutch students are exempted from doing an English test for the University of Toronto specifically, I have not done any academic preparation.

#### finances

Toronto is an expensive city. Before going I worked but certainly did not earn enough to live there for four months. Luckily, I received the Holland Scholarship and could borrow some money from third parties when needed. Expenses in Toronto will at least be 2000 a month in total.

### STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

#### study programme (content and organisational issues)

I followed five random courses that aligned with my current study and interests. Four of them were in the environmental section.

#### academic quality of education activities

The academic quality is really good in Toronto. Lectures are (generally) very useful and the facilities are outstanding. When comparing it to Utrecht University, the quality is definitely better in Toronto.

#### counselling & support at receiving university abroad



Counselling support is great. They normally respond in 24 hours and clearly answer your question.

transfer of credits

The transfer of credits went very easily. The University of Toronto sent me an email with some details about ordering a transcript. This was done in two clicks and free as the University of Toronto would pay for my purchase. They immediately send it to the University of Utrecht so that my credits could be immediately transferred.

**STUDENT LIFE**

welcome & orientation programme

Student life is great. There is enough to do and there are a lot of great international students you can come friends with.

accommodation

Accommodation is really hard to find. I was rejected for all the residences as I was a bit late and went for the Fall term only. Therefore, I had to rent an Airbnb for my whole exchange (which was a bit more expensive).

leisure & culture

Toronto is one of the most diverse cities when it comes to people. There are people from all over the world and the culture is great (people are very friendly). However, there is a lot of inequality and there are therefore a lot of homeless people.

suggestions/tips

Be proactive in the beginning when it comes to meeting up with people. You can immediately tell if they are alike you or not. That way, you will have a friend group very quickly and your exchange will be great.

**CONCLUSIONS**

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

Yes. The quality of education is high, the city is beautiful, and the culture is great.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

Assure to have enough money in advance as Toronto is really expensive.