Q&A session Asia

1. General information

Language (requirements)
The various institutions in Asia have a large amount of English course options. Any requirements for proof of English proficiency can be found on the various destination pages.

If you speak the language of the country (e.g. Japanese), you may take the courses in that language. There are often also options offered at the university to take language courses. Sometimes you even get credits for this.

Course options
Please note: as a Master’s student you are not always allowed to take Bachelor’s courses.

The Credit System in Asia is different from the ECTS system of the UU. You can find the conversion per institution here: https://students.uu.nl/en/credit-conversion-table/ It is possible that you have to follow several courses at the same time (up to 8 small courses at the same time).

Academic Calendar
Please pay close attention when applying to a Japanese university. The semesters there are mirrored (April-August is Semester 1, October-February is Semester 2). At UU you register for the UU semester and not for the Japanese semester.

Also pay attention to possible overlap. Check the destination page to see if there is any overlap, like if a university already starts in January. Talk to your professors about the options. It is often possible to arrange something, but do this on time!

Finances
Southeast Asia is a lot cheaper than the Netherlands, but Singapore is very expensive! Also East Asia is more expensive than the Netherlands (Japan, South Korea).

If you will receive a basic grant (‘basisbeurs’), you will still receive this when studying abroad. If you are entitled to a student product for your public transport (‘studentenreisproduct’), you can temporarily cancel this when you go abroad. You will then receive 104 euros per month as compensation.

There is one grant available from the UU for studying outside the EU: the Holland Scholarship. This scholarship is only available within Asia for students attending the Chinese University of Hong Kong. Keep an eye on the UU website for further information: https://students.uu.nl/en/academics/study-abroad/funding-grants/holland-scholarship. Each year a fixed number of scholarships are available.
For other grants, look at: https://wilweg.nl/beursopener. (Website only available in Dutch.)

**Culture & Safety**
Culture Shock is generally big in Asia and can be a challenge, but this is incredibly educational at the same time. Singapore and Hong Kong are a bit more western than the other Asian countries.

Be aware of things like demonstrations or natural disasters, but do not let this stop you from choosing an Asian destination. The partner institutions always offer good guidance in such situations.

**Campus Life**
Housing within Asia is often part of the application process. You can then specify preferences for housing. Living on campus is common, but not guaranteed. In the unlikely event that you cannot be placed, the host university will help you with other options. Singapore and Hong Kong are more difficult destinations in terms of housing.

Many Asian universities also offer fun activities for exchange students. This already starts with the Orientation/Welcome Week there.

**Visa**
Applying for your visa usually goes through the host university. Keep in mind that this can be expensive!
2. FAQ

2.1. Corona & safety

What about the COVID situation or other high-risk situations?

We follow the national travel advice. Does your destination country have Code Orange or Code Red? Then you are not allowed to go. There is however a possibility to apply to be exempted from this.

Are there already certain places where, for example, there is or will be political unrest?

That is very difficult to assess. For now, nothing is known about that. At the moment, the border with China is still closed. Hong Kong and Taiwan are currently open.

Which countries would you not recommend in terms of health and safety?

We have chosen our partners carefully, so there is no partner that I would advise against.

2.2. Language Requirements

It says that students must have proficiency in Japanese for Hiroshima University. Is this correct or does this only apply to courses in Japanese?

Hiroshima University is a faculty destination. I recommend contacting the International Office of Geosciences for specific questions about this university.

2.3. Selection process

In case of selection, how does the GPA requirement work?

If the partner institution has a GPA requirement and you do not meet it on December 1st, you will not be entered into the draw! On December 1st we will print your study progress report and use the grade that is on it at the moment.

If you are not selected for your first choice, do you have to write a motivation for your second choice?

No need for that. We arrange the top 3 behind the scenes ourselves.

Can it happen that you are not placed for your choice 1, 2 or 3?

Around 5% can’t be placed within their top 3. If this is the case, we will notify you and you will get priority on the spots that are still available. So there is always an exchange destination available for you.

Can you increase your chances at destinations that have an even split for Semester 1 and Semester 2?

Choose semester 2 if you can.

Is selection completely random or are there things by which you can increase your chances of being selected?
For university-wide destinations, selection is completely random. We draw lots to determine who gets to go to a particular university.

**How likely is it to be selected for your first choice if selection was necessary in recent years (Sungkyunkwan University)?**

This differs per university. If you want to know more about the exact numbers of students who applied to a specific university in past years, it is best to email the coordinator.

**Who selects the students?**

For university-wide destinations, students are selected by a lottery by the International Office.

**So is the motivation letter in random selection irrelevant then?**

The motivation letter will not be the deciding factor, but in order to be considered in the draw, you must submit a neat letter.

**How does selection work for a faculty destination?**

This depends on the faculty. Some faculties do a random selection, but some faculties select on motivation. Check with your faculty International Office.

**Some universities are listed on the website both as faculty and university-wide partners. So do I sign up for the university-wide exchange or the faculty exchange?**

Upon application, for destinations with both a UU-wide and faculty contract, we look at your study plan. If it contains subjects from within your faculty, you will be included in the selection of the faculty contract. If it contains courses from outside your faculty, you will be included in the selection of the UU-wide contract. This is managed by us on the back end.

**What should I have done by the December 1 deadline?**

By the December 1 deadline, you must have chosen a top three of destinations and have created a motivation letter and study plan based on your first choice.

**The number of spots per year on the website, is that the number of spots per faculty?**

No, this is the total number of places for UU.

**Is there any chance that you are selected by UU, but not admitted by the partner institution?**

This is a very small chance. Of course, you should do your application properly and meet any language and GPA requirements.

**Do you expect that selection will be needed for Malaysia?**

For Universiti Sains Malaysia, selection was required in past years. For Monash, we don’t know yet.

**Are there any specific requirements for Research Master students or are they the same as for other Master students?**
2.4. **Finances**

**Do you need a credit card for Asia?**

I would definitely recommend a credit card for Asia.

2.5. **Semesters**

**Can you go to Japan even if the semester overlaps with the semester here in the Netherlands?**

Yes, this is possible. Usually something can be arranged for the overlap in semesters.

**If there is overlap in semesters, should you arrange this before December 1?**

No, that’s not necessary yet.

2.6. **Subject Selection**

**When do you choose your subjects?**

1. Study plan to be completed by December 1, is for UU only. These courses are not definitive

2. Application to the host university: you should then submit your final subject choice. This may differ from your study plan.

3. With some partners you only choose your final courses when you are already there.

**What should you do if the university you want to go to doesn't have course listings yet?**

For all university-wide destinations, course information should be available on the destination page. Some universities do not yet have next year's courses available on the website, but in that case you can look at course listings in past years.

**Can you do a minor at Mahidol University?**

Discuss with your study advisor whether doing a semester abroad as a minor is an option.

**What subjects can you choose at Mahidol University?**

You can find the subject offer on the destination page.

**Where can I find what master's options are available in specific countries?**

On the destination page, you can find whether master's courses are available for exchange students and it indicates any restrictions on them.

**If the UU site says 'open for MA students: YES', will those courses be included in my master's program?**
Yes, but discuss this carefully with your study advisor or coordinator of your master's program.

**How many courses can you / should you take?**

This depends on the university. Some universities only have courses with a low workload and others with a high workload. You can find how credits in other countries compare to the Dutch ECTS system on the website: [https://students.uu.nl/en/credit-conversion-table](https://students.uu.nl/en/credit-conversion-table).

### 2.7. Culture

**Which country gives you the biggest culture shock / is least like the Netherlands?**

We often hear from students that Japan gives the greatest culture shock.

**What are major cultural differences between Malaysia, India, Thailand and Indonesia?**

Many of these countries are faculty destinations, so it's best to ask the faculty about this. Student reports you can find on the website often discuss the culture as well, or you can try to contact students who have already been to these destinations. Ask your International Office about this.

**In which country are locals most open to international students?**

For this, it is best to contact students who have been to these countries. Ask your International Office about this.

### 2.8. Other

**Is it possible to start your thesis, then go abroad and then finish your thesis?**

This is best discussed with your study advisor. They will know what fits your study program.

**I want to go to an institution that is not in the partner list. Is that possible?**

Yes, but this is not recommended. You will have to pay double tuition and you have to arrange everything yourself. UU can’t guide you then.

**Can you go to Kyoto with a program of study within social sciences even if Kyoto is not listed for social sciences?**

Kyoto is a university-wide destination. University-wide destinations are available to all students, so yes, you can definitely apply!

**How many students can go to Mahidol University? This is not listed on the website.**

For Mahidol, negotiations are ongoing, so this is not yet known.

**How long is a master's exchange? Or does it depend on the master and the destination?**

Indeed, this depends on the master's program and the destination. Discuss with your program coordinator and/or your study advisor how much room there is within your master's program.
Can you go to your destination country earlier, say a month before the semester starts to already start a language course?

This is certainly possible and does occur from time to time. However, you will not get an extra exemption at UU for months you want to spend extra in the destination country. So be sure to plan these months during a vacation.

What does undergraduate and postgraduate mean?

Undergraduate = bachelor and postgraduate = master.