



UU Study Abroad Report Form

faculty/college	Geesteswetenschappen
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's
name study programme	Media en Cultuur

destination city & country	Berkeley, USA
name university abroad	UC Berkeley
start date	10 / 01 / 2022 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	15 / 05 / 2022 (dd/mm/yyyy)

PREPARATION

exchange application process

The application process was not that hard. I just filled in all the documents that were requested of me.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

The counselling could have been better. The main problem is that my counsellor was in charge of all the UC campuses exchanges (and there are 9 campuses available for our UCEAP exchange). Therefore my counsellor did not know all the specific details on my UC Berkeley.

academic preparation

I had no extra preparation

language preparation

I had to prove my English language proficiency by doing a test. I believe 3 different tests were accepted. One of them was much cheaper than the others and could be done online so I did that one (duolingo).

finances

Collecting the finances was not a big problem since my parents support me, but getting all the required documents to prove my finances was a bit harder. UC (Berkeley) requires a lot of documents and are very strict (I for example handed in a document with my initials and last name which they did not accept since they needed to have my fully written out name. The bank could not give me my statement including the fully written name so I had to request a document from my bank that stated that my initials stand for my full name.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)

Major: interdisciplinary studies

academic quality of education activities

The quality differs a lot per course and also the way things are taught (since teachers themselves can choose how/what they teach). But the quality in general is decent!

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

You can get a lot of support! If you want support you can go to office hours every week.

transfer of credits



You need 12 or 13 units (depending on your faculty) a semester. Maximum is 20 I believe.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

My introduction was online and mostly directed towards new students (so freshmen) which made it a bit childlike

accommodation

I lived in Bowles, a gorgeous resident hall where food is included. It is not cheap but nothing in California (especially bay area) is cheap. In Bowles most students are American what allows you to really immerse yourself in the US. The price is about the same as living on campus but Bowles offers a lot more for that price (food, activities, parties, etc.)

leisure & culture

Culture is different, everything is extra and the differences between rich and poor are extravagant.

suggestions/tips

Do a lot of trips if you have a weekend off! Go to Tahoe, Santa Barbara, Point Reyes, and more! Stay longer than the semester, use the extra month to travel. Everything is expensive so bring enough money and ask ome Duo for some extra money (since you can't work there). Also don't take to many courses! It's best if you have one week day completely free from classes so you can do some activities or catch up. Also: follow a DeCal course! DeCal courses are courses taught by students, really fun courses (I did one on drinking tea and meditating) and you get units for these.

CONCLUSIONS

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

YES! Great place and really really really good on your resume.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

NO



UU Study Abroad Report Form

faculty/college	Geowetenschappen
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's
name study programme	Natuurwetenschap en Innovatiemangement

destination city & country	Berkeley, United States
name university abroad	UC Berkeley
start date	11 / 01 /2022
end date	15 / 05 / 2022

PREPARATION

exchange application process

The application process at the university itself went quite smoothly. Once it is known that you got into the University of California, it is more work, as you have to state your top 3 universities and have to provide a study plan for each. For me, the most difficult part was getting a visa.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

The support at the University was good; we had an information session beforehand, which was a good way to get into contact with other people who are going to the same university. This meeting was quite late though, so you need to figure things out on your own before that, as for some housing they look at how long you are on the waitlist and the visa process takes long.

academic preparation

For me, there was no academic preparation necessary. This really depends on the courses you want to take: some economic courses for example require intermediate micro and macro economics

language preparation

As this destination is English speaking, in general, no preparation was necessary.

finances

Berkeley is probably one of the most expensive destinations to go to. Most people have housing (sometimes including food) which is approximately 8000 euros per semester and food can sometimes also be three times as expensive in the supermarket as in the Netherlands. Make sure to have enough money saved up before, for example by loaning more at DUO.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)

Choosing courses works differently than in the Netherlands, as you can change your courses two weeks after they started. What I would recommend is to do at least one DeCal course: these are courses designed by students and are more special than what we are used to. Here, I followed a course in tea and meditation, which was practical and something you won't find in a course in the Netherlands. You could even follow a course in Kim Kardashian. Courses highly differ in the way they are structured: some only have papers, only lectures, homework etc., so it is good to not only look at the topic, but also which method suits you most.

academic quality of education activities



The academic quality of the courses was in general high. I followed a course in Astronomy, which was taught by a professor that had won many awards and was part of a Nobel-prize-winning team.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

I did not use any of the services of the university, but there were a lot of places to help.

transfer of credits

The transfer of credits was not too difficult, I only had to fill in a form with the courses and Berkeley sent my grades to the UU

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

For me, the orientation program was really boring, as it was during a time when numbers of Covid went up again and it was completely online. I think normally it should be fun and a way to meet people.

accommodation

For accommodation, there are different options: Coop, International House, residence halls, Bowles Hall, and private housing. I had a Coop as accommodation. This had many advantages: you live in a house with many other students, it is way cheaper (3.800 per semester compared to 8.000 for many other options), and you have unlimited good food which you can grab from the fridge. In general, more alternative people go to Coops. They have houses on the North side and South side. I stayed in Wolf House on the South side, because this was close to everything like frat houses, bars, and eating places. The North side is calmer but also has nice houses. I do recommend applying soon, so you have more chances to get the house you want. People who stayed in International House also loved it, I feel like that is the best way to meet people with the same spirit, as everyone there wants to get the most out of their time as possible (this was less the case in a Coop). The residence halls are also an option, this is also included food so it can be fun to eat with people you know, but in general, mainly freshmen stay here. Bowles Hall is a more expensive option (12.000 for a semester) and has smaller rooms but also has a lot of fun activities. Private housing can also be nice, as you do not have to follow the rules of an organization, so it is easier to for example invite people over. The downside is that you have to do your own groceries and prices are high in the supermarket. Most people have double rooms in Berkeley

leisure & culture

California is the best place for leisure, as the sun always shines and there is beautiful nature to see. There is always something to do and trips to plan. I would recommend planning time for yourself to do trips on the weekend, maybe plan it in a way that you don't have courses on Friday. The culture was something to get used to, as it is competitive in Berkeley, and in the US people are very friendly, but I found that it also stayed superficial a lot of times.

suggestions/tips

Start applying for housing and your visa as soon as possible. It is easy to get caught up in the competitive academic world, but in the end, it is mainly important to enjoy your time there! Go and see as much as possible.

CONCLUSIONS

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

I would recommend this university to others if you are interested in following interesting courses and studying at a good university. If you mainly want to have fun on your exchange, I would rather recommend Santa Barbara, as this is next to the beach and has more parties.

do you have any additional advice or comments?



Universiteit Utrecht

Good luck and have fun!



UU Study Abroad Report Form

faculty/college	Geosciences
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's
name study programme	Global Sustainability Science

destination city & country	Berkeley, California, USA
name university abroad	University of California, Berkeley
start date	17 / 08 / 2021 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	21 / 12 / 2021 (dd/mm/yyyy)

PREPARATION

exchange application process

I found the application quite organized as the EAP reciprocity website was very well made and the process was therefore quite clear. However, since the EAP is a platform that all reciprocity students going to UC are using it has a quite extensive application process. For example, you are required to choose a major in which you have to have 50% of your credits from and your choices are limited to the less competitive majors and ones complying more to your home university's studies. I'm not sure but this could be the case for more universities in the US, anyways, it's something to take into consideration.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

Counselling and support was given by UU but wasn't too extensive. I often ran into trouble, I felt that there should've been some sort of communication between the counselling and support members of each university to better coordinate and facilitate answers to students.

academic preparation

Course registration is in the middle of the summer and is quite competitive. I recommend researching a lot in to the courses you want to take, have several back up courses and there is also a website, provided by the university, where you can check and get an idea about the popularity of certain courses, how difficult they are to somewhat know how hard it will be to get in and to complete the courses.

language preparation

I was studying in English already so I did not need to do anything other than request a form from about my studies from the advisor confirming that my Bachelors course is in English. Otherwise there are many other options, such as IELTS or TOEFL tests you can take, make sure to book it far in advance.

finances

The plane tickets, rent and groceries will be quite expensive so it is important to prepare for this.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)

I choose the major Society and Environment. I had to choose two courses from this major and the rest I could choose from elsewhere which was Spanish and a DeCal class. The university is really big and therefore it's organization is quite decentralized or divided and it might sometimes be difficult to get to the bottom of questions you may have.

academic quality of education activities



The academic quality is unquestionably really good, you have are given many opportunities, you just have to know where to look for them, be proactive and take part in what you find interesting and beneficial for your academics. The grading is quite different though, I experienced that at Berkeley your final grade depends on multiple smaller assignments and tasks which I personally did not like as much. I personally prefer having fewer assignments to focus on in more detail.
counselling & support at receiving university abroad
Counselling and support were given by UU but wasn't too extensive. I often ran into trouble, I felt that there should've been some sort of communication between the counselling and support members of each university to better coordinate and facilitate answers to students.
transfer of credits
Transfer of credits is fairly simple, you have to be in touch with the board of examiners for approval of your courses at UC. Something I did not know is that you can sent the form of the course approval multiple times to the board to check if your courses will be accepted for credits at UU. This was important for me as my courses changed a lot in my first week at UC. It's especially important to check on DeCal's, if they qualify for the UU standards for credits.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme
I attended the Golden Bear Orientation, which in 2021 September was in hybrid form, it was quite nice and I made a few friends from there, I do think I was lucky with my group though. The international orientation was completely online though and it was mostly only useful for information about the university and not in term sof socializing.
accommodation
Accommodation is very expensive, so if you want to pay relatively less and you already are strongly considering going to UC Berkeley, you should sign up to the Co-op student housing now!! It's cheaper, there is communal cooking, cleaning and activities. Also they are themed so you will definitely find one that suits you, though be prepared, you will likely get a roommate. I did not live in a co-op but I also had a roommate, it was quite alright but the key is that you set ground rules and talk through them before you live in the same room, so you're on the same page. There are other options though that are listed on the universities website which is quite helpful but make sure you start looking early.
leisure & culture
What I most enjoyed about Berkeley's leisure activities is hiking, there were a lot of trails close to campus called the "Fire Trails" that are beautiful and have great views. I also joined an outdoor and hiking association called CHAOS which I highly recommend, many people organize trips (camping, hiking, skiing) through an email thread, you can also organize them yourself if your up for it. There is a separate website for all the different clubs which is very nice and great to join to make some friends too. Then there are the typical football games and rallies which are definitely worth experiencing at least once. San Francisco is close by and there are many events there, for Halloween, Fiesta de los Muertos and festivals like 'Outside Lands'. There are also many things that are provided to you for free from the university such as kayaks in the bay and gym access (including the pools). One thing that I found funny is how much everyone likes Bubble Tea, if you don't know what it is you will definitely find out, when people want to casual meet it's more common to get bubble tea then a coffee.
suggestions/tips
I mentioned them already in the above sections. Maybe for more about the housing, check out Facebook too, there is Kluegel house... but feel free to contact me for details.



CONCLUSIONS

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

I would recommend this destination as you will have a lot of academic opportunities available to you, you get to experience a culture that is different to your own and I personally also recommend it because of all the natural beauty that are close enough to visit from there.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

My advice would be to really do your research before going to get the most out of the place and the best way really is I think to talk to people who've been there.



UU Study Abroad Report Form

faculty/college	Faculty of Law, Economics, and Governance
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's
name study programme	Economics and Business Economics with Applied Data Science Minor

destination city & country	Berkeley, California, USA
name university abroad	University of California, Berkeley
start date	18 / 08 / 2021 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	17 / 12 / 2021 (dd/mm/yyyy)

PREPARATION

exchange application process

Although the process may seem quite new and rather complicated, UCEAP and UU will thoroughly help and guide you throughout the process. I recommend to start early as the process is lengthy and appointments at the American Embassy may only be available for much later dates. UU will also connect you with former students. Asking for their advice and hearing their experiences will not only help you, they will also make you even more excited for your exchange!

counselling & support at Utrecht University

UU will hold many presentations and meetings which prepare you for the entire process and introduce you to your fellow students who are going to the same campus. I recommend exchanging numbers with them as soon as you can, so you can go through the application process together. The meetings also take you through the steps of the process quite clearly. Outside the meetings, you can always send an email to UU. It may take some time until you get a reply, so asking previous students and students in your cohort may be quicker.

academic preparation

It is important to start early with your academic plan, look up the enrolment dates, and have some backup classes. Many classes may not be available to exchange students, or may have very limited spots which fill up quite quickly. Upper-division courses also may have pre-requisites, so you would have to contact the professors individually for them to decide if you meet the requirements. I found the courses to be quite challenging, so having a solid academic foundation is key.

language preparation

As I am following a fully English-taught undergraduate programme, I was able to meet the English test requirement by a language proficiency form signed by the UU employee in charge. Fluency in English will be very helpful to engage in the social activities and succeed in your courses, but you will also have plenty of opportunities to further develop and practice your English. People there will also be more than happy to help you.

finances

The living costs in the US, and especially in the Bay Area, is very expensive. I suggest keeping a budget plan and sticking to it. It is easy to overspend there, so be wary of what you are buying.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)



I picked four upper-division courses, two in economics, one in mathematics, and one in statistics. As I am an Applied Data Science minor, and that data science courses were not open to exchange students, I had to substitute my courses I would take in UU with mathematics and statistics courses. Although the economics courses were challenging, I did enjoy them a lot. They further developed my interest in economics and made me see the field in different but enlightening perspectives. However, the mathematics and statistics courses were very challenging and did not coincide very well with the courses I took in UU already. As such, I was underprepared. Fortunately, the professors and graduate student instructors helped me out greatly. Be prepared to put in more effort and don't be afraid to ask for help.

academic quality of education activities

The classes were interesting and the professors were very impressive. You can definitely tell how passionate they are in their respective fields, and how talented they are. The courses were quite demanding, as I had assignments due every week which count to my final grade. I recommend to definitely take advantage of the professors' office hours. Although they may seem intimidating, the professors are friendly and are more than happy to help.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

There is counselling and support for many different issues and topics. They also will send many e-mails with detailed instructions about the exchange application process. You can contact them through email if you have further questions, and you can also stop by their office on campus to ask them in person.

transfer of credits

I have not yet received the transferred credits. You will have to email the Board of Examiners in Utrecht University, and they will ask you about your coursework and academic experiences there.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

The orientation in UC Berkeley is called Golden Bear Orientation, and it lasts for about a week. The orientation format was hybrid, as there are some activities held online and some in person. It was definitely a fun experience, as you get to socialise with students not only from America, but also from many countries around the world. They are very friendly and easy to talk to. You are also introduced to the campus and you can learn some interesting historic facts.

accommodation

Housing rent, like the rest of the living costs in the US, is expensive. Finding accommodation is especially tricky if you are on exchange for less than a year as rental contracts in the US generally last for one year. I had to pay a short-term premium on top of my monthly rent so I could end the contract earlier. You can apply for on-campus housing, which I do recommend as it will save you a lot of time and trouble as renting in the US is rather complicated, and it may also be cheaper. You can also apply to live in a co-op, which will not only be a good way to save money, you can also make some great memories with your diverse and fun housemates.

leisure & culture

Although Berkeley is a student town, it does offer some fun activities for you and your friends to enjoy. Going to San Francisco is only 30 minutes by BART, which is the Bay Area's railway system. San Francisco is very lively, picturesque, and has many unique restaurants, cafes, neighbourhoods, and museums. There is definitely a lot to explore.

suggestions/tips

Although the courses may be demanding, it is important to take a break from your studies and enjoy your exchange experience! Take full advantage of all the various opportunities you have. Don't be afraid to explore the neighbourhoods and to join the student organisations. The closest friends I made are from these clubs.



However, there is quite prominent criminal activity, so be careful in not coming home too late and always travel in groups.

CONCLUSIONS

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

I highly recommend UC Berkeley. Not only are the courses interesting, but the professors are friendly and will definitely inspire you. I made some very fun memories and made some great friends. All in all, you will not have a boring day during your exchange.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

If you find yourself struggling in your courses, do not be afraid to ask for support from your professors and graduate student instructors. Living alone in a new country may seem tough at first, so make sure you have a good support system. Don't forget to reach out to your friends and family! Just talking to them will cheer you up a lot.



UU Study Abroad Report Form

faculty/college	Law, Economics and Governance
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's
name study programme	Public Administration and Organisation Science

destination city & country	Berkeley, United States of America
name university abroad	University of California, Berkeley
start date	08/01/2022
end date	16/05/2022

PREPARATION

exchange application process

The application process takes quite a while since you have to be selected to a specific campus for the University of California. Be aware that Berkeley is rather popular. A tip is to name specific professors/courses in your motivation that only are provided at Berkeley. Once you are selected for Berkeley, communication from the University of California is clear.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

If you have any questions about your exchange you can always contact the International Office at the UU. The application process and especially the VISA process can be stressful and a bit uncertain at times. It is also nice to make a groupschat with other UU students who are planning to go so you can help each other out.

academic preparation

In general you do not need any academic preparation for the semester at Berkeley (at least not in my case). It is good to have some general knowledge of your field of studies.

language preparation

I did not complete any language preparation before my departure. You have to provide proof of a sufficiency in English (TOEFL etc.). These requirements are stated clearly on the website of the University of California. Please be aware that if you completed bilingual education in high school and have obtained an IB diploma or if you are doing a full time English spoken bachelor, you are exempt from taking such a test.

finances

California is a very expensive area to live and travel in. Please start saving money as soon and as much as you can.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)

Berkeley offers many interesting courses. There is one date on which the courses open for registration. Look up the courses that appeal to you before that date and registrate for these courses exactly on that date and time (note: this is American time zone). Courses fill up extremely fast so make sure to be on time and have some back ups. Overall, if you are waitlisted you will get into the course. In the first week of classes it is very easy to add and drop classes. If you would really like to get into a course, you can always go to lectures in the first week and talk to the professor. In most cases they will be able to get you into the course in some way. Also make sure



to check out the DeCal courses. These courses are very fun since they are organised by Berkeley students and are not too much work. They have very diverse topics, from Baking and Kayne West to Meditation and Coding.
academic quality of education activities
The level of the courses is doable. I would say it is comparable to the UU. All in all, professors are very knowledgeable. Lectures are more massive than I was used to at the UU. Sections are smaller and usually more interactive. The workload itself is rather high, but the course materials are not that hard.
counselling & support at receiving university abroad
There are many ways to receive counselling and support at Berkeley. The options one has are explained from the introduction on. Berkeley establishes itself as a university that is focussed on the well-being of its students.
transfer of credits
At the time of writing my obtained credits were not yet transferred.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme
There is an obligated online orientation. Other than that there is the Golden Bear Orientation (sort of an UITweek) in which you have to participate. In my case this was still online, which made it not that fun. I would recommend meeting others in real life.
accommodation
I stayed in the International House, which was the best experience ever. The IHouse accommodates many international students from all over the world. It is a great way to meet new people, learn about cultures and have the college experience of living in dorms. IHouse is a great community and everyone is super open and welcoming. The food is quite tasty and healthy (especially compared to other housing options). Be sure to registrate for the International House via their website as soon as possible (they also have an opening time). If you are not admitted at once, you can always try to call or mail them again.
leisure & culture
If you like sports you can join an intramural team, which is a team consisting of other Berkeley students that competes against other Berkeley students. Make sure to go to the sport events and cheer on the Golden Bears (Basketball all year, football fall semester, gymnastics all year and baseball). Another recommendation is to go to a Baseball game in San Fransisco. Visiting San Fransisco in general is great. Berkeley has a great Cinema on Shattuck Avenue if you want a chill night. On Wednesday evenings the International House offers a coffee hour which introduces a specific culture. Also make sure to go hiking on the Fire Trails and to the Big C (do not miss the swing on the way).
suggestions/tips
Get involved in the Berkeley community by doing some sports (or attending sport events) or joining a club (Berkeley has countless opportunities). Also make sure to save some time on the weekends to travel around California, visit the beautiful National Parks and go surfing.

CONCLUSIONS

would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain
I would definitely recommend Berkeley to others! It is the perfect combination of good education and a beautiful destination. The people are welcoming and the sun shines most of the time. It was a blast.
do you have any additional advice or comments?



Stay in the US as long as your VISA allows you to. It is great to travel around and explore after the hard studying. Moreover, make sure to start your VISA process as soon as possible. This can take quite a while. You might also want to consider to visit another embassy in a neighbouring European country, since the waiting time might be shorter there. I went to Brussels but I also know of people who went to Frankfurt or Paris.



UU Study Abroad Report Form

faculty/college	Faculty Recht, Economie, Bestuur en Organisatie
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's
name study programme	Rechtsgeleerdheid (= Law) binnen Utrecht Law College

destination city & country	Berkeley, United States
name university abroad	University of California, Berkeley
start date	12 / 01 / 2022 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	13 / 05 / 2022 (dd/mm/yyyy) /Flight back: 08/06/22

PREPARATION

exchange application process

Choosing campus

As preparation of my exchange application process, I googled the Utrecht University partners on the uu website and sorted by country. I googled the websites and locations of most of the USA partners and found out what their specialties were. I also knew UC had a separate application: first you choose your top 3 partners (which for me were all universities in the USA) and once you get into the University of California, you can apply to a specific campus (like UC Berkeley, UCLA, UC Santa Barbara, etc). I personally knew UC Berkeley was known for their high competitiveness and academics (especially being the #1 public university in the world) and since I really wanted to be in such an environment (as it pushes me to do more), I decided to put this one as my first choice. I put UCLA and UCSB as my second and third choice. Looking back at it now and having visited all 3 choices, I don't regret going to UCB, as it was the best fit for me. When making your choice, it might be good to know that: Berkeley really is competitive, so the focus of students will be on academics, but has amazing professors and this really pushes yourself to do more and step outside of your comfort zone. Berkeley (the city) is not the most fun, but you'll spend most of your (free) time around campus anyways and San Francisco is an Uber ride away. UCSB is more 'chill'. From what I've heard, the courses are easier, so you'll have more free time. There are a lot of student beach houses, which look amazing, but the campus, city and housing are all a bit further apart from one another (read; bicycling distance instead of walking like Berkeley). The UCLA campus was honestly gorgeous (although Berkeley campus was beautiful as well!), almost private school like. The downside, however, is that you can only go to the campus 'pub' by foot. If you want to go out or leave campus, you really need an Uber or car in LA, which is not necessary in Berkeley or Santa Barbara.

I also looked at the courses that were provided by each! However, you can switch courses until about 5 weeks after the start of the semester. So really: don't worry about choosing the perfect combination of courses. Most people drop out of some courses in the first two weeks and simply add some new ones without really falling behind (this is very normal and professors keep this in mind when planning the).

Visa

Please start early with the application process, as you cannot simply finish it at once. It really is about taking several steps. It really is doable and not that awful, but since you will need to get a lot of documents (and all of the institutions take their time to give it to you), you have to start on time and not do everything in the last minute!

counselling & support at Utrecht University



I feel like the counselling and support from Utrecht was okay. I do feel like they were a bit too late with the visa meeting, because we already had to have applied for the first few steps of the visa process when we had the meeting (in order to have our visa in time for the departure). I also feel like – now looking back at it – they mainly knew what other students told them, since they have not been there themselves (especially with just practical recommendations about living options or insurance etc.) Other than that, I should really state that Cathelijne (the UU exchange coordinator for North America) was really nice, open and willing to help (as far as she could) if we had any worries or questions!

academic preparation

I did not really prepare academic wise, aside from looking into the provided courses! I waited until the first week (especially with all the course changing that a lot of people still do) to rent the prescribed books from Amazon (with my Berkeley student account)

language preparation

I did not really prepare language wise.

finances

I put my DUO (aka borrowing money from the Dutch government) to the max 1,5 years in advance and during the exchange and I would recommend doing that. Berkeley is in “the Bay area” and thus is very expensive. My room + meal plan (12 swipes a week, which for me was about 6 days a week) was about 10.000 dollars. There are however cheaper options (like cooperation’s – you have cleaning tasks, but it is cheaper). You’ll probably want to go on some (weekend)trips, so take that into account as well.

For insurance: I got ISO insurance (the best/most expensive one for about 500 dollars) and asked for a waiver (you can apply for one until a few weeks before the semester starts on you UC Berkeley account). If you don’t get insurance yourself, you have to get SHIP, which is about 1800 dollars for a semester. The good thing about SHIP is that everything really is covered. For ISO, it is not.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)

- You do not really have to follow courses from your major. However, sometimes you have to have a certain major to sign up for certain courses.
- You can easily switch courses during the semester for about 5 weeks! Do not worry about choosing the perfect combination.
- Use the ‘schedule planner’ in your Cal Central to see if there is overlap. If you have overlap with lectures, there probably is nothing you can do. If you have overlap with the discussion groups, you can maybe see if there are any available discussion sections during different times.
- Berkeley provides “DeCals”, which are mini-courses about random subjects, organised by students. They have less units (1-2 instead of 3-4 units) (Dutch: studiepunten), but can be very fun! Examples of Decals I could choose from are: Happiness Advantage, The Books of Harry Potter, Solving a Rubik’s Cube, Playing Poker, The Biology of Squirrels and Food & Wellbeing of College Students. These DeCals can be very useful if you f.e. have 12 units, but need 13 units for enrollment and don’t want to take on another 4 unit course.

You can sign up for them in the first few weeks on a separate DeCal website.

Courses I did:

- Supreme Court & Public Policy (Legal Studies 138)

Very interesting! It was a bit difficult at first, because of my lack of knowledge about the individual Supreme Court justices, but it was a very valuable course. I quickly gained the needed prerequisite knowledge and had



such an amazing time listening to the professor (Elizabeth Tejada). She really speaks passionately about her material, the views of the Supreme Court and forces students to think critically about decisions and make up their own view. Her way of teaching is also very different from my professors at Utrecht University; the lectures and her own 'writing notes' are very important, the material is mainly 'background'. She asks a lot of the students, so be prepared to work hard, but she is also fair in her grading: if you work hard, you'll get rewarded for it. I would definitely recommend taking a class of her.

- Introduction to General Astronomy (Astronomy C10 - HIGHLY RECOMMENDED!!)

I am a legal studies major and am not the best in STAM (Dutch: beta vakken) but I highly recommend the following course: Introduction to General Astronomy (C10) from Alexei Filippenko. I heard many amazing stories about this professor and this course in general, and I can honestly say that this course is worth the hype! Professor Alexei Filippenko is not only an amazing astrophysicist (f.e. being involved in the discovery of the accelerating universe), but speaks very passionately during his lectures, which actually makes you want to go to every single one of his lectures. The course material itself really is amazing: he covers light, planets, stars, galaxies, blackholes, possible life on other planets, the accelerating universe and A LOT of fun/mind-blowing facts. The course again requires quite some work, but is definitely worth it.

- Comparative Society (Anthropology 141)

This was a small course (only having about 15 students) and was less work compared to my other two courses named above, which was nice. The professor (Xin Lui) was a real philosopher, was very knowledgeable about his material and gave his lectures in more of a 'discussion' way. He gave us his view on the book and would stimulate us to participate in a discussion with each other and him. He also tried to approach each student differently/individually, as he very strongly believed in "having to want to learn in order to learn". Would recommend this one if you like philosophy or want to take a first dive into 'philosophy' and already have some courses that are demanding a lot from you.

- DeCal: Nutrition & Well-being in College

Honestly, I would not recommend taking this DeCal. DeCals are supposed to be "fun" and "laid-back" and this one definitely was not. Even though I learned some new things about nutrition, it was not worth the work for a 1 unit course. DeCals that were supposedly really fun were: Happiness Advantage and Tea & Meditation.

academic quality of education activities

Overall: I had way more assignments, so be prepared to write a lot of essays, but the assignments and finals were all relatively short and easy.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

I did have some issues with COVID when I arrived (I could not go to my dorm, because tested positive two days after I had arrived), which was really stressful. The university did not help a lot at first to be honest, but after calling for about three hours, I finally got to speak to someone who was willing to help and solved the problem quite fast (I got to go to the isolation dorms, even though I was not in the dorms yet).

I also used the University Health Services (like doctors), f.e. when I dislocated my knee. They helped me a lot. I f.e. got crutches and was able to reserve the LOOP (a golf cart with a driver, who would drive me around campus because I could not walk that far with crutches).

Other than the above, I did not use the counselling or support.



transfer of credits

This was quite easy. I purchased my transcript with a Berkeley stamp from CalCentral (kind of like the American Osiris that you get access to as a student) for about 2 dollars. How you have to apply for transferring your credits, depends on your department. For law I had to send an email to the board of examiners and had to fill out a form, which I did. After about 7 weeks, I got confirmation that my credits were transferred.

Keep in mind: the UU will only put "pass/no pass" for all your courses. I f.e. got all A's and they were (unfortunately) all simply changed to "pass".

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

The orientation programme (called: GBO – Golden Bear Orientation) was partly online at home prior to the start of the exchange and partly online in Berkeley during the first week, because of COVID. It will probably be in person again in the future. For me, the amount of information we got was sufficient. It was ofcourse a bit more difficult to make friends since it was online, but they really did their best to get the students to connect with each other.

accommodation

I stayed at campus housing: David Blackwell Hall to be precise. However, friends have stayed in: Ihouse, private housing, a coop, Bowles and other campus housing and I have been in all of them.

Housing

Overall: you want to live on the South side of campus (east is okay, north and west are kind of far), as all social life will be there (think: bars, parties, etc).

There are some options, and it really depends on your preference:

- University housing: I applied for UC Cal (Cal = Berkeley) Housing.

+ Contact with Americans, Mealplan, very close to campus

- Mainly first years (aka 18-19 years), less social than I expected

I stayed in David Blackwell Hall, which is the best of the campus housing (according to everyone haha). This is a new modern building, has doubles (two people in a room) and is the closest to campus (like walk 1 min) – google it. It was an amazing building and I was very lucky to have gotten there, but it was less social than I expected (compared to f.e. ihouse). This could also be because the American students really are there to study hard and do not feel like planning a lot of trips. If you choose campus housing, Blackwell definitely is the best. Unit 3 is also very close by campus, but is a bit more outdated (all the Units are). Other options are: martinez commons, unit 1 and unit 2. Personally, I would not want to be in Foothill (north side). As it is far from everyone else's housing and quite far uphill, everyone tends to meet up in the south side, so you have to be prepared to mainly walk to other places to meet up.

- International House:

+ contact with internationals for trips etc, mealplan, close to campus

- less contact with Americans

I really visited iHouse a lot, as I eventually ended up having a lot of friends from iHouse. The food is better than campus dining halls. The location is good as well. I would definitely recommend going to iHouse if you can afford it! You'll make friends easily and everyone is down to plan a lot of trips to touristic places (unlike the us citizens). Downside is the price, the fact that you probably won't be living with Americans (about 30% is American and the rest is international) and that it can sometimes be a bit too social (from what I've heard). Looking back at it, I would however recommend it to my younger self.

- Coops (aka cooperations):



+ cheaper

- cleaning tasks

Coops are private houses of about 20 students (depending on the coop). They are way cheaper than ihouse, campus housing or bowles, because students clean their own house (which you have to be willing to do). You have to do certain shifts every week on specific times, like cleaning (the kitchen/bathroom etc), cooking, doing the dishes etc. It really is nice to save quite some money by doing house tasks, but really think about which shifts you choose (f.e. do not choose a shift on Friday like a friend of mine, since you'll probably want to plan some trips during the weekends). The other students living in coops are generally American and a bit alternative. Try to look at the location: south side is better.

- Private housing:

+ private room/no roommate, cook yourself, cheaper (but not that much if you compare total)

- grocery shopping is expensive, further from campus

Less expensive, but further from campus (generally meaning you have to walk back at night on your own, which is not awful, but not the best either with regard to safety). Also, you have to cook for yourself, which means you can eat healthier than in the dining halls, but it is time-consuming and very expensive in the bay area. I had a friend who moved from a private student house to a coop, because the groceries simply got too expensive.

- Bowles Hall: Most expensive, quite far from campus (More towards the East/north, which means you have to walk up the hill and away from everyone (the south side/social side). It is a beautiful building though, the food is very good and I heard they really form their own community/social bubble.

Fraternities/sororities: This is not really a possibility (with regard to housing) if you are only here for a semester. You can join a frat/sorority for a semester, but I personally do not think it is worth it as it is very expensive (like 2000 for a semester, including food, but excluding housing). Housing is also available for the "sisters" that did the most of the sorority, so is generally given to the second years.

leisure & culture

Leisure

There is so much to do at UC Berkeley! There are a lot of student organizations (with literally every sport/hobby you can think of, like Quidditch, dancing, "women in the gym", etc.) you could join, so that is definitely a tip. I f.e. got part of the hiking club (called: chaos) and joined some hikes when I was in the mood (no obligations, which was nice). Speaking of hiking: this really is an amazing hobby I discovered in Berkeley, because there are some hiking trails (fire trails/Big C) closeby.

Once you've made your friend group, you can always just grab a coffee on campus together, chill on the Glade (big grass field on campus), go swimming (there are a lot of swimming pools on campus you can go to for free as a student), visit the little towns nearby with the free public transportation card of the university or (what I mostly did) explore San Francisco! Besides San Francisco (Golden Gate, city, Dolores Park etc), I planned day trips with friends to Santa Cruz, Muir Woods, Stanford, Silicon Valley.

With regard to going out: Every Tuesday, we went to Raleigh's (a pub near the south side/housing) for "Taco Tuesday". On Thursday's we went to Kips (a bar near the south side/housing). During the weekends we either went to frat parties (although in Berkeley you need a bid to get in (= a wrist band that a frat guy himself has to give you and/or your friends) or we took an Uber to a club in San Francisco.

Culture

I did not really have that much of a culture shock, even though I had never been to the US before. Ofcourse, a lot is going to be different (like a lot of homeless people and having to be aware of your surroundings at night – I f.e. bought pepper spray because it made me feel safer, although I never felt like using it or holding it). The social culture is a bit different too, but you'll eventually get used to it and/or you'll always have the other exchange students to meet up with.



suggestions/tips

Weather!

I know it's California, but the sun really shines all the time and is quite strong. So, when it's 18/19 degrees, everyone would wear a t-shirt outside (or maybe a longleave/sweater if you're not going to sit outside/study in the library). Also, you'll probably buy a lot of university merch (because everyone does that and for f.e. Cal days or sportsgames (you can attend the ones from you university for free, as you're a student, and be aware: there are a lot). Keep this in mind when packing (f.e. don't pack the extra sweater or cap you're doubting about).

CONCLUSIONS

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

Definitely!!! The US university culture is an experience on its own: sports games, cheerleaders, dorms, a lot of merch, a music band and just 'campus life' in general!

If you're also going abroad for your studies and want to be in a competitive environment, I would recommend UC Berkeley! Don't worry about the social life compared to other UC's, because believe me: it is also in Berkeley! Just be prepared for a bit more seriousness with regard to studying.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

Wherever you go, you'll have an amazing time and experience! So don't be disappointed if you did not get into your first choice. I've met up with some friends at other UC's and really believe I would have had an amazing time wherever I want (although I'll obviously always be happy I got to go to Berkeley hahah).



UU Study Abroad Report Form

faculty/college	Social Sciences
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's
name study programme	Psychology

destination city & country	Berkeley, United States
name university abroad	UC Berkeley
start date	10 / 01 / 2022 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	25 / 05 / 2022 (dd/mm/yyyy)

PREPARATION

exchange application process

The application process for Berkeley is unfortunately not the easiest. It will take you a lot of time and you will most likely get very annoyed by the US consulate at one point. But it's all worth it when you arrive in Berkeley and start your amazing time there.

My biggest recommendation here is to start with the Visa application asap. I got my visa a few days before my flight to San Francisco. This was very stressful and they kept telling me they couldn't do anything to speed up the process. I figured out that calling every day to check up on the status and telling them to make a note saying you need the visa very soon helps. Just stay calm and trust the very stupid, bureaucratic process of the US government.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

The counselling and support you get from the university wide office of the UU is really nice and supporting. They can always help you with questions and worries.

academic preparation

I honestly didn't really prepare for Berkeley in an academic way and in the end everything worked out. Just keep in mind that the level of the courses may be lower at Berkeley, but the workload sure is a lot higher than you're used to. You may struggle at the beginning of your exchange semester, but you will totally get used to this way of studying.

language preparation

I was already fluent in English, so this wasn't really a problem for me.

finances

My number one advice: don't go here if you worry about money. UC Berkeley and the Bay Area in general are extremely expensive places. I went at least \$15.000 over budget and I didn't even do a crazy amount of trips/vacations/other expensive things. Studying here is just really expensive. I would highly recommend taking into account spending at least \$25.000 a semester. There are a lot of hidden costs, for e.g. Golden Bear orientation. Also take into account that at most residence halls you have to pay everything at the beginning of the semester or in the first three months. So make sure you have enough money from the beginning to pay for this. I know this doesn't sound too encouraging, but if you do have the financial resources to do this exchange, you are most definitely going to have the time of your life here at UC Berkeley.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD



study programme (content and organisational issues)
<p>I did a mixture of different programmes at Berkeley. I took courses in Music Therapy, Sociology, Anthropology and English Literature. I personally loved these courses. Especially SOCIOL1 (intro to sociology) and MUSIC48 (music therapy) were amazing. The professors were really nice and good at their jobs.</p> <p>I didn't experience any organisational issues and was actually very surprised to experience how well everything was organized. The syllabuses of every course were very clear and helpful during the semester.</p>
academic quality of education activities
<p>As I already mentioned before, the level of the courses at Berkeley is a little lower than you might be used to, but that doesn't mean that they are of bad quality. The courses really challenged me, because there are a lot of deadlines. I had deadlines every week for every course. That meant that I really had to keep up and put effort into every course I took. I do feel I got the most out of it because of this.</p>
counselling & support at receiving university abroad
<p>UC Berkeley has many resources for students who need advice, support or help. They have an international office where they can help you with all your exchange related questions. There is a really big medical centre (Tang Centre) as well, where you can get help for free (or a fee of like \$35, which is super cheap for US health care). You can go here with medical as well as mental problems.</p>
transfer of credits
<p>I took 15 credits, which translates to 30 ECTS. At this moment I'm still waiting for my grades from one last course, so I can't really tell yet how the transfer worked out.</p>

STUDENT LIFE
welcome & orientation programme
<p>They have the GBO (Golden Bear Orientation) at the beginning of the semester. I honestly didn't think this was worth it. It is mandatory, but in my case it was still online because of COVID and therefore super boring. Just sit through, the rest of the semester will be way more fun.</p>
accommodation
<p>I stayed at Ihouse (international House). This was the best decision ever. Please apply for this, even though it is a little bit more expensive than other residence halls. It will be worth it, because this place is where everything happens for exchange students. Everyone wants to live here and all the friendships are made here. I made friends for life here from a lot of different countries, who will actually come and visit me in Utrecht this summer. As an undergraduate you do have a roommate, but I actually really enjoyed this and my roommate is now one of my good friends :)</p>
leisure & culture
<p>There are many, many different clubs, teams and organizations at Berkeley. Everyone here loves sport, so I would definitely apply for a sports team here. I joined the French Rock club together with friends with Ihouse and we had so much fun here. We met a lot of new people and got to experience French culture at the same time.</p> <p>San Francisco is only a short train ride away and here there are so many things to do. Even after a semester I still haven't seen half of the city. Luckily this is a good reason to go back soon ;)</p> <p>I would also recommend walking over the Golden Gate during sunset. You have the most amazing view and you can also see the campus (and Ihouse) from here.</p>
suggestions/tips
<p>Prepare yourself well financially speaking and you will have the most amazing time of your life. Going to Berkeley was the best decision I've ever made and I will remember this time forever.</p>



I would recommend flying to Berkeley a little earlier than the start of the semester. This gives you time to get rid of your jetlag and explore the city and campus before your classes start.

CONCLUSIONS

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

I think my answer to this question is super obvious, but YES.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

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UU Study Abroad Report Form

faculty/college	REBO
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's
name study programme	Bestuurs- en Organisationswetenschap (Political Science in Berkeley)

destination city & country	Berkeley, USA
name university abroad	University of California, Berkeley
start date	20 / 08 / 2019 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	20 / 12 / 2019 (dd/mm/yyyy)

PREPARATION

exchange application process

The application process went well, since the website and information presented by UCEAP is very clear. It was very helpful to be in contact with other students that were going to go to UCB, because we could help each other with questions and other problems. I fully recommend exchanging phone numbers during the first meetings! It took a lot of time and effort to complete the process (especially the visa can take long), but it is not very hard, mostly just bureaucratic steps.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

I could always send an e-mail to the UU employee in charge, which was helpful sometimes. It can take a while before you receive answers, so asking fellow students was easier and quicker in some situations. Complicated questions would be answered by the UU, but quick questions are more efficiently answered by fellow students or exchange students from earlier semesters. The predeparture meetings were also very helpful since questions were answered immediately (sometimes even by students who went here last year).

academic preparation

I read a lot about the available courses and made sure to have a plan about my academic goals during my semester abroad. I did not feel like I needed more preparation than exploring the courses and what I had learned at UU at that point (and everything turned out well).

language preparation

I had passed the Cambridge test in high school and thus did not need to complete any more tests in advance. I felt confident about my English proficiency and so I did not prepare anything else. I also feel like living there is the easiest way to improve your English and so I trusted that everything would turn out fine. Lastly, there are a lot of resources one can use at UC Berkeley to help improve papers or other school work, so that is always an option too.

Finances

There are not a lot of scholarships available and so it is important to keep in mind that you will need to pay for everything yourself. For instance, a shared room will be around \$1000 per month. I started saving money long before I went here.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)

I picked 3 lower division classes and 2 upper division classes. The lower division classes did not have any prerequisites and so it was easy to get into, for the upper division classes I had to either e-mail my professor or stop by once to explain my situation and academic history. In the end, I got into every class that I wanted to



take. Small classes for only 1-2 credits for just 1 to 2 hours a week are called a 'decal'. These are very fun, specific classes that can help if you need just one more credit or are really interested in the topic. I learned a lot from mine!

academic quality of education activities

The professors and class material are very impressive, but the tests are not as hard as I thought they would be. I just went to the discussions and lectures and tried to keep up and passed all my classes. I would say the difficulty of classes is pretty similar to how it is in Utrecht. Nevertheless, it is a very inspiring environment with loads of motivated people, which helped me a lot!

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

I received a lot of e-mails that gave easy step-by-step instructions about what I needed to complete before and upon arrival. It was a little hard to reach them from the Netherlands (waiting long for short replies), but in Berkeley they are very easy to talk to and helpful. Stopping by is way more effective than e-mailing.

transfer of credits

-

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

There is a week-long orientation programme called Golden Bear Orientation, that is very helpful to meet people but mostly to get to know the area in and around campus. It also helps a lot to ease into the new culture you are stepping in to and for some the GBO-group would be their friend group for the rest of their stay.

accommodation

I lived in international House, which is a very expensive but awesome housing option. Food is included in the price, which is very helpful since it is the best (and probably healthiest yet most delicious) food around Berkeley. Most people I met and befriended during my exchange were from iHouse. It is a super welcoming environment that truly made me feel like home and I would 1000% recommend it to everyone going to Berkeley. It is definitely worth every penny. Rooms are pretty small, and you share one with a roommate, but my housing was the best part of my exchange by far.

leisure & culture

San Francisco is nearby and only 45 minutes by bus (and the bus is free!), and has a lot of cool neighbourhoods, food places and museums.. I planned a lot of trips during the weekends and have now seen a lot of California! I also liked staying home during the weekends sometimes, to really experience living in a different country as a local.

suggestions/tips

For supermarkets: trader joe's is the most like the supermarkets we know. As a student, you can use the busses in and around Berkeley for free, as well as the gym that is a two minute walk from campus. I also really suggest iHouse (it was the best choice I made), taking as many trips as you can (I recommend Big Sur, Santa Barbara, and Hawaii if you ever get the opportunity), and living as a real local in Berkeley (walk the 'fire trails' and go to as many football games as possible!). Lastly, since it is not very safe at night, do not walk alone when it is dark and be aware of thieves and pick pocketers at all times.

CONCLUSIONS

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



YES! The classes are so diverse and interesting, and the people are so attentive and welcoming. I loved how the academics were still on but that there was a lot of time for social life as well. From culture to nature to academics to the wonderful people, it is the best balance and recipe for an awesome semester abroad.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

I think living in iHouse makes all the difference and being open to new experiences is super important. There are so many people to meet and so many places to explore!



UU Study Abroad Report Form

faculty/college	Humanities
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's
name study programme	Comparative Literature
destination city & country	Berkeley, USA
name university abroad	UC Berkeley
start date	14 / 08 / 2018 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	16 / 12 / 2018 (dd/mm/yyyy)

PREPARATION
exchange application process
The exchange application process was a lot of work. There was a lot of paperwork and bureaucracy involved, especially after actually applying for the study abroad program. The application to study abroad was easy enough, but afterwards I had to arrange a Visa which was a lot of work.
counselling & support at Utrecht University
There were a lot of meetings about studying abroad – general meetings, but also meetings specifically for the students that went to UC universities. This was really nice, because they gave us a step-by-step explanation of how to get everything done in time.
academic preparation
I did not really prepare academically. I made sure my study abroad period did not coincide with mandatory courses at Utrecht, and other than that I just took courses at Berkeley that I thought were interesting. There weren't any prerequisites for the courses I wanted to take.
language preparation
Since I went to the USA, I officially had to do an English test to prove my English was good enough. I did not need to do this, however, since I already had my IB certificate from high school that showed my level.
finances
This can be really tricky, and a tip that I can give is that you should definitely make sure your free OV is exchanged for a monthly fee. This will give you some extra money. Other than that, you should keep in mind that there are no scholarships if you study outside of the EU, so you need to pay for everything yourself.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD
study programme (content and organisational issues)
I could choose whatever courses seemed fun to me, so I did. This resulted in me having four amazing classes that fit me very well at Berkeley. I had a lot of fun studying, and it was easy for me to enroll in classes since there were no prerequisites for the classes I wanted to take.
academic quality of education activities
Berkeley is a pretty difficult school, and the quality of education is very good. You do need to work hard when you're there, because the professors are going to ask a lot of you. The fact that you take around four classes instead of the usual two also takes some getting used to, but if you work hard it will all be okay!
counselling & support at receiving university abroad



There are a lot of counselling and support options at UC Berkeley. It does not matter what you're struggling with, there is someone to help you: anxiety, homesickness, stress, drug/alcohol problems, loneliness, sexual abuse... When you get to Berkeley, there will be a lot of orientation options that tell you exactly where you can go if you need support.

transfer of credits

I have not transferred my credits yet, but the courses I took at Berkeley were all approved by the Board of Commissioners. Make sure you let your courses be approved before your stay or at the start of your stay, so you know if you are actually allowed to take the courses you want to take.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

There was an extensive week-long orientation program that familiarized the students with the campus, resources and other students.

accommodation

I did not choose for on-campus accommodation, I stayed in an AirBnB instead because I did not want to have a roommate.

leisure & culture

Berkeley is a very lively city, you can really tell it's a university city. There are museums, a lot of restaurants and cafés... And if you have seen enough of Berkeley, you can be in San Francisco in 30 minutes.

suggestions/tips

I suggest going to family-run Asian restaurants in Berkeley. There are a lot, and you can get amazing meals for less than \$10. Also, don't be afraid to join a student organization or just walk around the city to explore!

CONCLUSIONS

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

I would, because I think the education at this university is very good. The fact that it's an English-speaking destination is also convenient, especially if you do not speak a different language.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

If you are hesitating about going abroad: just do it! It may seem like a lot of work and money but once you're there it's a lot of fun and it's an experience that will make you grow.



UU Study Abroad Report Form

Faculty/college:	Humanities
Level:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor <input type="checkbox"/> master <input type="checkbox"/> PhD <input type="checkbox"/> other
Name degree programme:	Liberal Arts and Sciences

Destination city & country	Berkeley, USA
Name host institution and/or company/organisation	University of California, Berkeley
Purpose of exchange	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> study/courses <input type="checkbox"/> work placement <input type="checkbox"/> field work <input type="checkbox"/> other
Departure date (dd/mm/yyyy)	12/01/2019
Return date (dd/mm/yyyy)	08/06/2019

You are requested to write on the following topics.

Text boxes will expand automatically while typing.

Preparation

Exchange/placement application process:

I know I can't speak for everybody, but I thought the application process went very smoothly. You do have to prepare and fill in a lot of files, AND take a TOEFL or CPE test if you haven't already, but if you just follow the steps on the application form and start on time you should be perfectly fine.

Counselling/support at home university:

Ingrid Dijkstra (Exchange Coordinator North-America) is always willing to help you out if things get a bit too overwhelming. She also organizes pre-departure meetings that cover pretty much all you need to know about your exchange (from housing to academic stuff to financing your trip). I do hope that future students get more information on how to apply for an insurance waiver. I had to figure that out myself and spent weeks calling, e-mailing, and even faxing(!) UC Berkeley's insurance office.

Academic preparation:

I browsed through the course syllabi before classes started and looked up some of the keywords that sounded unfamiliar to me, but that was pretty much it. Some of my friends who were in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics), however, did have to take some preparatory courses (but nothing too difficult).

Language preparation:

I completed a CPE course years ago and I went to school in Santa Barbara, California before I started college, so I guess that was my language preparation.

Finances:



Get ready to kiss your savings goodbye! I paid around \$1,500 for my insurance, \$400 for a mandatory orientation weekend (Golden Bear Orientation), and around \$3,600 for housing, including meal plans (I was considered lucky, some students pay \$10,000 a semester). I spent about \$500 each month on coffee, eating out, public transport, travels, and other activities. Luckily, UC Berkeley has free sport facilities, and evening classes sometimes come with food!

Study/placement abroad period

Study programme/work plan (concerning content and organisational issues):

The enrolment site is pretty self-explanatory and easy to use. I ended up on the waiting list for almost all my classes, but if you show up to the first class the professor will almost always grant you a spot. I took classes in Chicano Studies, Philosophy, Entrepreneurial Studies (if you want to ask the CEO's of Guitar Hero, YouTube, Rotten Tomatoes, or Airbnb questions IN PERSON, take this class!) Political Science, and even fencing.

Academic quality of education/placement activities:

UC Berkeley professors are all extremely knowledgeable, always willing to answer questions during office hours (don't hesitate to visit them!), and take criticism very seriously. That said, the classes were super cramped, the exams way too easy (although I've heard differently from STEM majors) and sometimes the professors just decide to ditch the syllabus and talk about some personal issue for hours. Something else to keep in mind: you're expected to show up to class at all times and actively participate in class discussions. Not raising your hand can actually cost you half your grade.

Counselling/support at host institution/organisation:

UC Berkeley has amazing counselling facilities. There is literally a team of psychologists, student advisors, mentors, and tutors ready to help you. Be prepared for long waiting lines, though. Something as simple as getting a signature can actually take a loooooooooong time.

Transfer of credits:

I'm in the middle of this process right now!

Student life

Welcome/orientation programme:

Expect a lot of bonding exercises, drama and group therapy and drug awareness classes during Golden Bear Orientation. A lot of new UC Berkeley students come fresh out of high school, have never lived on their own, and tend to get a little crazy after the introduction period (hence the drug awareness classes). UC Berkeley takes their Golden Bear Orientation very seriously, but all those therapy sessions (with names like "Get Your Bearings") just gave me the giggles.

Accommodation:

I lived in the co-ops (organization that provides low cost student housing) and had an amazing time. I paid way less than students who lived at I-House, and the managers of my co-op organized all sorts of fun activities to take part in (beach, hiking and, camping trips, sleepovers in the living room, Harry Potter marathons, yoga sessions, and even a puppy hugging event). Berkeley co-op community is pretty big, so houses often host parties or (vegan!) barbecues together.

Leisure/culture:

The Bay Area has an amazing cultural scene! The UC Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive (BAMFA) is just around the corner (free entrance with your Cal-ID) and other great museums (such



as SFMOMA, Cal Academy, Exploratorium) are only one BART ride away. I personally very much enjoyed the Telegraph Avenue Walk, a walking tour app that guides you through the history of the Free Speech Movement in Berkeley. If you're more of a nature kind of person, don't hesitate to check out the many beautiful hiking trails around campus. The Berkeley Rose Garden and UC Berkeley Botanical Garden (also free with your Cal-ID) are also very much recommended.

Suggestions/tips:

Apply for the co-ops (<https://www.bsc.coop/index.php>) and make sure to let them know you're an international student to get priority.

Conclusions

Would you recommend this host organisation/destination to others? Please explain:

Yes. Definitely. For me, studying at UC Berkeley was the opportunity of a lifetime. You don't get an opportunity to receive feedback from the CEO of YouTube on an app you've built anywhere else but here. The libraries are stuffed with all the literature you could ever dream of and the professors are just great. Surround yourself with the most ambitious students and you'll find yourself doing all sorts of amazing things in no time. Go Bears!

I would. Amazing cultural,

Do you have any additional advice or comments?: