



faculty/college	Betawetenschappen
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	Biologie
destination city & country	Davis, California, United States of America
how did you travel to and from your destination?	Airplane
name university abroad	University of California, Davis
start date	6 / 1 / 2020 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	20 / 3 / 2020 (dd/mm/yyyy)

**PREPARATION**

exchange application process

Studying abroad had been a longtime aspiration of mine, so the exchange application process was one that I did very carefully, and with a lot of anticipation. It was pretty straightforward, but nevertheless, I did do my best to do as well as I possibly could

counselling & support at Utrecht University

Planning my exchange came with the necessary hurdles due to issues related to my health, but the UU international offices and counselors connected specifically to the region to which I was travelling were of great value to me in helping prepare everything for my travels. They were flexible and patient, and I could call or drop by with pretty much any problem or situation, and I would leave with a good approach / good advice to solve the issue.

academic preparation

Due to the fact that I travelled abroad in my fourth year of my bachelor's, I didn't really have to worry about not having enough knowledge to do advanced courses overseas. It turned out to be quite the opposite: despite choosing advanced classes, I found that there was still a lot of overlap with courses I had done at the UU. The good thing was that I therefore did not need to study that much ;).

language preparation

I was brought up trilingual, with English being one of the languages that I was taught at a very young age, and thus did not really expect to find any issues. I did find that there were certain (academic) terms connected to college life in the US, that were completely foreign to me, so I did have to do a bit of catching up once I arrived in Davis.

finances

Going abroad, especially to California, is going to be expensive. I wish I could tell you differently, but that's sadly not really the case. California is one of the most expensive states in the US, and especially food and rent (expect anything from \$650-900+ per month) were my largest expenses. Travelling as well, and especially domestic flight tickets are often more expensive than you'd think. During the VISA application process there is a minimum amount of money you should be able to have on your bank account, and even though this number is quite steep, I do see why they would want to ensure that students come with sufficient finances. I met an Australian exchange student who was quite tight on money, and he basically only ate peanut butter sandwiches, and pasta.

**(interrupted) STUDY ABROAD PERIOD**

welcome & orientation programme



To me, the orientation was indispensable; not only did I learn about some very practical things about (campus) life, VISA related issues, and travelling within and outside the US, they also taught us about American culture (like tipping), and I met some of the best friends I made during my entire abroad stay at this very orientation.

study programme (content and organisational issues)

With a little bit of a search, I was pretty much able to find the correct people I needed to talk to when I wanted to change courses or drop a course without any real hassle. Everyone was incredibly helpful, and very friendly.

academic quality of education activities

The classes were pretty much comparable to the ones I had followed here in the Netherlands. I'd say that the biological sciences of Davis were of good quality, but that the classes I have done in the Netherlands were definitely more engaging and of a higher standard.

transfer of credits

Usually, the transfer of credits happens without too much of your own engagement and trouble, but because I wanted to graduate immediately after I arrived in the Netherlands, I had a bit of trouble getting my credits transferred to the UU, as these things, apparently, take quite some time. Once they came in, everything worked out well, and my credits were uploaded in Osiris in no time.

### CORONAVIRUS CONSEQUENCES

support guidance of host university

The UU kept us informed of the situation in the Netherlands, and on their advice for any possible returns. I do remember distinctly that the advice changes (almost) overnight: one day we were told to stay in our respective exchange countries as we were still safe, and if that was our personal wish, and the next moment we were urged to return home by both the university, and the region-coordinator.

support guidance of home university

We were offered both practical support (on how to get back, and even how to apply for financial aid), and some form of mental support. Our region coordinator reached out to us and mentioned that we were free to call her and even disclosed some mental health guides in that same email. I thought this was incredibly considerate, since the last few weeks of March were pretty stressful for us exchange students.

### CONCLUSIONS

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

I definitely would recommend attending UC Davis. This specific campus is sometimes the butt of the occasional joke, but I do believe that the small-scale setting of Davis definitely has its charm. I personally incredibly enjoyed my stay, and Davis has a lovely biking culture that was a great plus. I had absolute no desire to do everything by car, and even though you'd think that it would be impossible to get around on bike in the US, it is actually very well possible in Davis. Northern California is great, and it's incredible close to very nice national parks. Biological sciences, and especially veterinary and agricultural sciences are incredibly well developed at UC Davis, and as a biology student, I really enjoyed the courses I did over there. Their courses are more widespread in subject (e.g. you can do a neurobiology class that only focusses on recreational drugs), and it is very easy to follow courses that lie beyond your major, like mythology, but also beer-brewing and wine-making.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

No matter where you go, going on an exchange is an incredible experience and an immense learning curve. Yes, it's incredibly scary, and can be lonely at times, but at least for me, it was a great way to push myself out of my comfort zone and really just enjoy. I'd wish you that same wonderful experience. Your university years are really the best time to do it, so grab that chance with eager hands.

Ps. If you decide to go to Davis, make sure you pass by the Yolo Berry and the Davis Creamery: their frozen yoghurt and ice cream is absolute heaven. I spent way too much money there, haha.



## UU Study Abroad Report Form

faculty/college	Humanities
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's
name study programme	Artificial Intelligence

destination city & country	Davis, USA
name university abroad	UC Davis
start date	01 / 09 / 2019 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	30 / 12 / 2019T (dd/mm/yyyy)

### PREPARATION

#### exchange application process

The application process is very very long and complicated. everybody said it would be so, but its not until you go through it yourself that you realize how long it actually takes. They ask for some crazy things, like a vaccination for smallpox, which the Dutch government doesn't offer and immunity because you have had it before doesn't count. Make sure you start well in advance and check your email as much as possible. Also check you spam folder; I nearly missed a couple of the deadlines because emails had ended up there. This way ended up having my interview in the Dutch consulate in Amsterdam a week before I was supposed to leave for the USA. Also, if you attended another university before the program you are doing right now, make sure you have transcripts of that too. In the end everything went alright, but it is definitely something you should be aware of. Also, consider that you have to pay for EVERYTHING, no application is free and if they have to send a document to you be prepared to pay for that too. The US government hasn't made things easy for us nor cheap.

#### counselling & support at Utrecht University

The process is pretty straight forward, as in, they do tell you pretty precisely what you have to do, its just that it is a lot what you have to do and for every form you have a different platform with a different username and password. I didn't use much of the support available from the UU.

#### academic preparation

In my year the GPA requirement was a 6.85., but I saw that this varies form year to year.

#### language preparation

I took the IELTS test for the English requirement. It is not very difficult but make sure you schedule it in advance (they only have one test a month), take that entire day off and be prepared to pay 250€.

#### finances

Like I said, if you are on a budget, make sure it's not a tight one. Every application form, appointment and registration costs money and lets not forget about health insurance. You HAVE to have a health insurance provided by the university, but 1) it costs a fortune (~1000\$ for three months), 2) it doesn't cover the period when you are not on campus (so the 30 days before and after the program starts) and 3) you can find an alternative insurance BUT the university might not accept it even though it is equivalent to theirs, then you'd have to pay for both, so beware of that. In total I think it cost about 8000€ all in all.

### STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

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

Everything was fine, not really anything special.



academic quality of education activities
They introductory courses are difficulty wise honestly a joke, I have had courses that were more difficult in high school and I did an E&M profile. They do give you a lot of homework though, so you are very busy doing these course, but they are not difficult. I did a data visualization class and it was basically a glorified Excel course. The advanced courses are much much more difficult and really offer much more of a challenge, these are the courses you really learn something from. I heard that they do this for American students so that they complete the first two year of university easily and when its too late to go back, they put in the advanced courses.
counselling & support at receiving university abroad
SISS is an awesome resource that is available to you online and on campus, if you have any questions you should definitely go to them.
transfer of credits
I took four classes which amounted to about 17 credits in total, this was equivalent to 23 EC here, so when I came back I had to take an extra class to make up.

## STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme
The university has a mandatory orientation day for all international students (which cost 95\$ surprise surprise). This is where I met most of the friends I made during my exchange, people come from all over the world. It was a really fun day and because they are international students like you, you can easily make friends and hang out with them!
accommodation
I stayed off campus in a rented room, which cost me about 750\$ a month. This was a solo room with a shared bathroom I rented in a house. Its very difficult to find a lease for only a couple of months, most of them want a year lease. If you want a room for yourself expect to pay around 800\$-1000\$ a month in Davis, you can make it cheaper if you share a room with somebody else. If you are looking for an extra cheap option, a friend of mine stayed in what they called the "domes" near campus. It is a dome that you share with somebody else, one person has a bedroom, the other has the loft. The people that stay there are a bit alternative and my friend didn't have the greatest time with her roommate. They are however 230\$ a month. The more expensive option are the west village apartments. They are close to campus and offer a lot of benefits (pool, gym, outdoor areas), but they offer only year round leases, so if you plan on only going for a couple of months, you'd have to find somebody else to lent you room to. They can cost upwards of 1000\$ a month, for a private room. You also have the U-apartments, but they are far away from everything and in a desolated area.
leisure & culture
When you are a student at UC Davis you can make free use of a huge gym on campus. You can also get 6months free amazon prime, with your student email. Otherwise, they are a lot of bars in Davis and parks. They often have farmers markets which are very fun. The university also has a game center, with a bowling alley, video game consoles and card games. I would highly recommend!
suggestions/tips
Davis claims to be the "biking capital of the US/world", which I found very funny. Let me tell you, biking there is a lot different then it is here. Bike lanes are line on the ground, the cars are like monster trucks and according to American traffic rules, you have to act like a car! You have to sort in between cars speeding at 80 kms per hour. So that's fun. Otherwise, I would very much advise you go to Yosemite national park and if you can try and camp there. The university loans you camping gear for a really small fee and Yosemite really is beautiful!



The university also hosts a lot of games, American football, volleyball, soccer, etc. they really are part of the American experience.

## CONCLUSIONS

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

I really loved my exchange, but it was much more because of the people than the place. Davis is fine, but its not anything special. I would really recommend anyone to go on an exchange to the US, though not Davis necessarily. It really was the most fun experience I've had so far in my life.



## UU Study Abroad Report Form

Family name:	xxx
First name:	xxx
Student number:	xxx
Faculty/college:	Beta Faculty
Level:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor <input type="checkbox"/> master <input type="checkbox"/> PhD <input type="checkbox"/> other
Name degree programme:	Informatiekunde

Destination city & country	Davis, United States of America
Name host institution and/or company/organisation	University of California
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)	12-09-2017
Return date (dd/mm/yyyy)	26-03-2018

### Preparation

Exchange/placement application process:

The application process is quite a hassle but the UU does a good job in guiding you throughout this process but be prepared to fill out a ton of forms and do a lot of annoying small things, it can be stressful but if you start on time everything should work out perfectly fine.

Counselling/support at home university:

As said, the UU guides you through the process quite well, Ingrid is the supervisor for North America region and she responds quickly to e-mails and will help you with any issues that arise.

Academic preparation:

Make sure your GPA is high enough to apply, additionally you will probably have to take a TOEFL test, which is not that hard.

Language preparation:

If you can hold a conversation in English, you'll be fine. Being immersed in English will give your English skills a nice boost. People in Davis were overall pretty used to International students and will understand that your English is not perfect.

Finances:

Make sure you have enough funds, the living expenses estimation on the EAP exchange site gives a pretty good indication. Having a little extra for some road trips is nice because there is plenty of



cool things to do around California. This exchange will not be cheap but the experience is one-in-a-lifetime!

**Study/placement abroad period**

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

At UC Davis there are plenty of courses to choose from. Most likely you will do a lot of other courses than you intended on your initial study plan since you can switch courses in your first two weeks every quarter so don't spend too much time on your initial study plan. Be prepared to be flexible on your courses since sometimes you won't get the exact ones you want, especially if you're doing courses in a very busy major (UCD students usually get preference over EAP students).

Academic quality of education/placement activities:

The quality at UC Davis is pretty good, overall all my professors were very engaging. Ofcourse it differs per course so definitely ask around for recommendations on courses or great professors! In my experience, course load was higher compared to UU but the level was slightly lower.

Counselling/support at host institution/organisation:

Excellent, there are a lot of support institutions at UC Davis and there is always someone to talk to for issues you have.

Transfer of credits:

My credits have not been transferred yet.

**Student life**

Welcome/orientation programme:

We had 1 day of orientation with other EAP students which was awesome because it allows you to connect with other international students quickly and get to know some people to hang out with. Definitely use this opportunity to get acquainted with some people

Accommodation:

Finding housing was pretty difficult and most rentals require a year-long lease. Definitely start searching early. Also be prepared to share a bedroom as this is much more common in the United States.

Leisure/culture:

Davis does not offer the most things to do, luckily you can easily drive to a whole bunch of cool places quickly. Lake Tahoe and Yosemite park are both amazing, San Francisco is close and Sacramento offers some cool stuff as well.

Suggestions/tips:

Make sure you have enough free time besides your studying to do cool stuff around California, it is definitely worth it to go explore the entire state since it offers such a wide variety of amazing places to visit and things to do.

**Conclusions**

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

Definitely, Davis is a sweet little city that revolves mostly around the university, there are a lot of really cool people and it is very easy to make friends here. They are also really used to international students which is convenient.



Do you have any additional advice or comments?:

It is a lot of work to get there, but once you're there all that work is forgotten and it's an unforgettable experience!





## UU Study Abroad Report Form

Faculty/college:	Social Sciences
Level:	<input type="checkbox"/> bachelor <input type="checkbox"/> master <input type="checkbox"/> PhD <input type="checkbox"/> other
Name degree programme:	Psychology

Destination city & country	Davis, United States of America
Name host institution and/or company/organisation	UC Davis
Purpose of exchange	<input type="checkbox"/> study/courses <input type="checkbox"/> work placement <input type="checkbox"/> field work <input type="checkbox"/> other
Departure date (dd/mm/yyyy)	30-08-2016
Return date (dd/mm/yyyy)	31-12-2016

### Preparation

Exchange/placement application process:

I had to write a motivational letter, a study plan, a financial plan and a CV, which was a lot of work altogether, but not really hard to do. And if you keep in mind what you're doing in for, it is not hard at all. For the University of California, you have to go through two application rounds. One for the University of California in general and then one for the particular campus you will attend. I was admitted to my second choice, but I was really happy with it and had a wonderful time.

Counselling/support at home university:

The support from the international office is great. Every time I had a question, it was answered really quickly and I always got good advice. So if you have questions, do not hesitate to ask them. Make sure to go to the pre-departure meetings to meet other people that go to the same university, which can be fun. And these meetings are really important because every meeting contains necessary information about for example the visa procedure.

Academic preparation:

I did not have to make extra academic preparations. Because I did an extra year in my bachelor, it was not necessary for me to get exactly 30 EC in my semester abroad, which made it a lot easier to create a good study plan. If you really need the 30 EC for your graduation than I would suggest to contact the board of examiners to be sure your study plan is accepted.

Language preparation:

I had to prepare for a TOEFL test, which I expected to be very hard beforehand, but it turned out to be easier than I thought. It is not difficult to get a high enough score to go to the University of California. The test is very expensive though.

Finances:



I saved a lot of money, and I needed it all. I made a financial plan and for the most part it worked out quite well. I think in total I used 7000 euro, for housing, travel, study expenses, groceries and extra's. Groceries and other stuff are extremely expensive in Davis. Traveling is also expensive except travelling by car.

**Study/placement abroad period**

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

It was a lot of fun to choose the courses. There were a lot of psychology courses that are not offered at Utrecht University, so there was a lot to choose from. Furthermore, you can choose anything you want, and you are not bound to the courses of your own major. If you want to enroll in a history course while your major is psychology, it is totally possible. When you have submitted your initial study plan, you can still change it the first 10 days of class. So, the first week you can attend classes to see if it is an interesting course, and you can drop the ones you do not like and keep the others. Ultimately, I choose 3 psychology courses and joined the campus choir, which was a lot of fun! In total, to complete the semester successfully, you need to take 12 units.

Academic quality of education/placement activities:

I really enjoyed the courses that I took at UC Davis and the quality of the courses was very good. The workload was in my opinion not very different from the workload at UU. For every course, I had 2 lectures a week for every course, which resulted in a lot more contact hours than I was used to in Utrecht. But this was fun actually, since everything in Davis takes place on campus. It is a really nice place to be. In my experience, the teachers are really passionate about their course and they have office hours once or twice a week. I recommend going to these office hours. It helps learning the material and it is fun to discuss the content of the course with other people and the professor. The tests were not difficult. If you just study the material, it is totally possible to get a good grade. Every course gave possibilities to earn extra credits by participating in research or writing an extra paper. It was actually quite fun to do this, so if you are not sure about your exams, you can always do that.

Counselling/support at host institution/organisation:

I did not need that much counselling, but if I had a question, there was always somebody to help me immediately. People are very friendly and helpful in general and this was also the case at the University. For example, there was a possibility to go to different English writing specialists. If you had to submit a paper, you could go to this specialist with your first draft and then they assisted you in improving your essay. This was very helpful, and these writing specialist were good and really nice. Also, as I said before, I really recommend you going to the office hours. During these office hours you can just ask all the questions you have, and the teachers really want to help you. Furthermore, the international office organized fun activities, which you should join to make contact with other international students.

Transfer of credits:

A little bit later than expected (in March), I received an official transcript with the UC units I earned for the courses. I had to submit this to the board of examiners and there it was decided how much UU 'study points' I would receive for the units. I received 24 study points in total. I got an A+ for all my courses and it was transferred into an 8.5, which seemed not totally fair since A+ is the highest grade you can get in America, but it was ok.



**Student life**

Welcome/orientation programme:

This was great. In the first week, we had one day with a lot of information about studying at UC Davis. It was a nice chance to meet other international students. Furthermore, in the same week they organized a bike tour, a pool party, an international café and much more. I think it is really important to go to these activities, because it is the best chance to meet people. The information was clear and sufficient.

Accommodation:

It was very hard for me to find any place to live while I was still in the Netherlands, so I was really glad that I found something. Unfortunately, this turned out to be a terrible place for me. I don't like to party every night, and at this apartment complex, there was loud music every night until 5 AM. So, after a couple of nights I was really determined to find something else, and I did. I met this other Dutch girl that was staying with two ladies in a big house in a wonderful part of Davis (Arlington). It was the best thing that could have happened to me and I had a wonderful stay. I paid \$500 a month, which is kind of cheap in Davis, and I could use their washing machine, kitchen etc. They also had a piano, I could play on every day, and they were very kind people. So, I understand that it is reassuring to find a place before you go to Davis, but if you don't, it is not a big problem, because there are still options when you get there. A friend of mine stayed in an airbnb for the first week and found in that week a place to stay. There are many possibilities.

Leisure/culture:

There is a lot to do. You can get a membership at the ARC (the gym on campus). It is open every day from 6 AM to 12 AM and there are many group lessons, which I liked very much. I also attended a salsa class, which was a lot of fun. In Davis, there are many sports events like basketball games, football games etc. It is nice to attend some of them to immerse yourself in another culture. Furthermore, there is an organization that organizes different trips to beautiful places like Yosemite, Lake Tahoe and Desolation Wilderness. I went on one of those trips and it was amazing. If you like sports, you should go to Sacramento (20 minutes from Davis) for a Basketball game. It was one of the most spectacular things I ever did. Furthermore, it is really nice to go to San Francisco for a weekend. It is a beautiful city with many things to do.

Suggestions/tips:

My suggestions are posed throughout the text.

**Conclusions**

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

I had the best time and I would really recommend everybody to go to Davis. It is a small town, but there is a lot to do and it is an enjoyable student town. People are very nice, especially when they find out that you are an international student. Everybody travels by bike and there are many nice restaurants and cafés, which makes it very cosy. I found here a wonderful combination between leisure activities and education. If I had the possibility, I definitely would return.

Do you have any additional advice or comments?

Buy a bike on the second day you get there. Try to find a nice place to live, and go to all the events that are organized for international students. In that way, you will make nice friends and have a



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wonderful time.