



# UU Study Abroad Report Form

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

destination city & country	Guadalajara, Mexico
name university abroad	Universidad de Guadalajara
start date	16/ 01 / 2019
end date	31/ 06 / 2019

You are requested to write on the following topics. Text boxes will expand automatically while typing!

<b>PREPARATION</b>	
exchange application process	The application process went well. The website of the university is quite clear, and you can find all the information you need easily. Besides with the list of destinations gives a good overview of the possibilities. I already had the idea to go to a Spanish speaking country, because I wanted to improve my Spanish. After I choose this destination, there where some documents to fill in. In the beginning it looked like a lot and quite complicated, but in the end, it was not that hard. This first part of the application takes the most time, certainly making the study plan. For me it was important to plan well which courses I could/had to follow in the Netherlands to get enough credits at the right level, this is because all the courses abroad/in Mexico will be assigned as a level 1 courses. Uploading the documents was also easy, you just have to follow the steps.
counselling & support at Utrecht University	I found the information meeting at the UU of the internal office very useful. In the general the international office helps you very well (also the one at the faculty).
academic preparation	Besides planning (making the study plan) and learning Spanish, I didn't have to do any extra academic preparation. In my case it didn't really matter which courses I choose at the university in Guadalajara.
language preparation	Before I went to Mexico I took Spanish courses at university. This will bring you to an A2 level. I also put a A2 level (I asked my Spanish teacher of the UU to fill it in) on the language proficiency letter, and they accepted that. The level recommended is B1, but with the courses and some self-study my Spanish was already good enough to follow the classes. I had all my classes in Spanish, although it was exhausted in the beginning, you learn very fast and so it wasn't too difficult either. The professors are really friendly, and they understand that Spanish is not your native language. Besides I also took extra Spanish lessons in Mexico. If you study at the faculty CUCSH there is an organisation that is called CICELEM. The course isn't for free, but for me it was worth it. With this I got a B2 level in the end. I think besides that it is useful in class learning Spanish will also give you better relations with the people (not everyone speaks English).
finances	Mexico is of course cheaper than the Netherlands. I paid around 200 euros for my room and the food is also not expensive. I had some good markets near my house, which is cheaper than supermarkets. Besides the street food is also cheap and delicious (like around 2-5 euros for a good meal). If you want to go by bus, you can get some so called "transvales" with your student card at the university. With this the bus will only cost 3.5 pesos in stead of 7, which is really cheap as well.



### STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

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

I believe a month before arrival in Mexico, we got a tutor from the university in Guadalajara. She sent me all the information that was needed to select courses. The inscription was online and wasn't that hard to do. On the online program you could select any faculty and study you like. Although I could also choose any subject I wanted, I choose to stick with anthropology and to get only anthropology courses. Mexico is really interesting for anthropology. They have a lot of courses, way more than in the Netherlands. Besides we only have cultural anthropology, in Mexico they have all the subfields of anthropology. In the end I choose 4 courses. I was really satisfied with my courses. I learned a lot about the history of Mexico in an anthropological and archaeological perspective. I can say that my courses were useful for my career.

#### academic quality of education activities

The level of the courses were a bit lower than in the Netherlands. I didn't have to do as much as in the Netherlands but still learned new things. But this wasn't a problem at all. This gives enough space to learn and improve Spanish and to do fun things.

#### counselling & support at receiving university abroad

I found the organisation very good. You could always ask the tutor things and as I already mentioned the professors are very friendly and willing to help.

#### transfer of credits

The transfer is still not completed at this moment. But you can see your grades and credits online on their student website.

### STUDENT LIFE

#### welcome & orientation programme

There was one welcome day for all the faculties, which was fun and nice to already meet some people. But the introduction day of the faculty even more useful, this was one week later I believe. On this day, you get information, you see your tutor, and you get your schedule.

#### accommodation

My house was a nice student house, with a mix of Mexicans and foreigners. I had a very big room and I only paid 200 euros per month. The house was located in the centre and only 15 min. walking to the university. I found the house on roomgo.com.mx. I found this website very useful and easy to use. In general, there are a lot of rooms available in Guadalajara. I managed the room before I went to Guadalajara, but if you have some time before the classes start, you can definitely find sometime when you are there.

#### leisure & culture

I really loved the city and the culture. There are always things to do and we had a nice mixed group of Mexicans and foreigners to hang out with. There are a lot of nice student houses, so mostly I went to chill or to party in one of these houses. Besides I played soccer here. This was a team from the faculty. The university gave information about their sports facilities on the introduction day. I wanted to do a team sport to meet more people, and as I already played soccer in the Netherlands this was a very good opportunity.

#### suggestions/tips

Mexico and certainly Guadalajara is a very pleasant place to stay. But you should not underestimate the dangerous sides of Mexico. You really shouldn't walk alone in the night or go to neighbourhoods you don't know well. But luckily there is uber, which is cheap and safe. If you be careful, nothing will happen.



## CONCLUSIONS

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

Yes, I would definitely recommend going to Guadalajara. The university is maybe not as well organised as in the Netherlands and it might take a bit longer to get things done, but you will get used to it. Besides Mexico has a lot of interesting culture and very important, good food.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

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Can students contact you for additional info and do you give us permission to put this in the student reports on our website? If yes, please write down how they can get in touch with you (e-mail, Facebook, Instagram etc)

Yes, [indy.joosten@hotmail.com](mailto:indy.joosten@hotmail.com)

### Contact details Student Services / International Office

Visitors' address: Bestuursgebouw, Heidelberglaan 6, Utrecht

+31-(0)30-253 7000

[exchange@uu.nl](mailto:exchange@uu.nl) (information/questions)

[verslagen.internationaloffice@uu.nl](mailto:verslagen.internationaloffice@uu.nl) (report)

[students.uu.nl/exchange](http://students.uu.nl/exchange)



## UU Study Abroad Report Form

faculty/college	Humanities (Centro Universitario de Ciencias Sociales y Humanidades)
level	<input type="checkbox"/> bachelor's      X master's
name study programme	Researchmaster Nederlandse Literatuur en Cultuur

destination city & country	Guadalajara, Mexico
name university abroad	Universidad de Guadalajara
start date	01 / 08 / 2018 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	15 / 12 / 2018 (dd/mm/yyyy)

### PREPARATION

#### exchange application process

At the start this went quite easily. The overview of courses and masters was very confusing and rather misleading though. The website of UdG (Universidad de Guadalajara) states that there are many more masters available than really exist and my designated tutor knew so little that he only made it more confusing, by saying that the masters probably do exist (which thus turned out to be untrue). So I was rather disappointed in the beginning, because many courses that I had wished to take were non-existent. However, I think bachelor students won't have this problem and the courses that I choose eventually were also quite interesting.

#### counselling & support at Utrecht University

The support was good and they responded quickly. The only thing is that no one could tell me is how my grades and credits will be converted, which left me in uncertainty about how many courses to follow

#### academic preparation

The level of education is a bit lower in Mexico, so you don't have to worry about your academic skills

#### language preparation

I strongly advise to take as many Spanish classes beforehand as possible. The courses are so much more interesting and valuable when you can understand and participate in them and your Spanish will increase all the more! In personal life you can definitely manage without speaking Spanish, but I do think that it negatively affects your experience abroad, because you will stay confined to the international bubble, while it is so easy to get into real contact with Mexicans, they are very open and welcoming.

#### finances

Life there was as expansive as life here in the Netherlands, but that is mostly because I went on so many trips and did many activities. Rent is somewhere between 120 and 250 euros a month and food is cheaper. Uber is very cheap, but taking Ubers all the time costs you still more than riding a bike.

### STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

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

It is of course a bit weird to go to Mexico when you study Dutch literature. However, my professors encouraged me to go, so I went. I took a large variety of courses, ranging from global politics to sociology, but I'm hoping that the board of examiners will not be too strict on which courses to take.

#### academic quality of education activities

The academic quality varies per teacher, but all classes were more superficial and less demanding than what I'm used to back in the Netherlands.



counselling & support at receiving university abroad

We got a mentor, which was a nice gesture, although he couldn't help with everything. In Mexican organizations generally there is a lot more bureaucracy and chaos, so prepare for that. On the other hand, Mexicans are quite helpful, so eventually you'll get everything sorted out.

transfer of credits

I came back a month ago and at this stage I do not know how the transcript of credits will go, which does worry me but I can only hope UdG will send my grades soon and the board of exam grants me enough credits.

## STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

This came a bit late because the academic year had already begun (ay, mi México) and was mostly focussed on bachelor students. But the faculty had a programme called InterCUCSH especially developed for exchange students, to go on trips and have parties.

accommodation

I rented a room in a house of Conexión, which I can really recommend. It is just nice to know someone picks you up from the airport, you will have nice roommates and won't be scammed. I also like Conexión way better than Integrate.

leisure & culture

There is a lot of culture to be found in Guadalajara, as well as places to party. The university hosts interesting lectures and there are dancing classes offered everywhere.

suggestions/tips

Don't go to the supermarket (or just for some essentials) but do your grocery shopping at the markets. It is a thousand times cheaper and locals are super sweet.

## CONCLUSIONS

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

Claro que sí! Mexican culture is so vibrant, they are really open to help you further and Guadalajara is very suited to live, I think for example Mexico City is a bit harder to manage. And especially for a public university, UdG scores (relatively) high on the quality of education.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

Try to combine your time abroad with some travelling before or afterwards, Mexico has so much to offer!

Can students contact you for additional info and do you give us permission to put this in the student reports on our website? If yes, please write down how they can get in touch with you (e-mail, Facebook, Instagram etc)

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## UU Study Abroad Report Form

faculty/college	Humanities
level	<input type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's
name study programme	Language and Culture Studies

destination city & country	Guadalajara, Mexico
name university abroad	Universidad de Guadalajara
start date	12 / 08 / 2018 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	13 / 01 / 2019 (dd/mm/yyyy)

**You are requested to write on the following topics. Text boxes will expand automatically while typing!**

<b>PREPARATION</b>
<b>exchange application process</b>
The application is not difficult but quite a few documents are required, with stamps on it. Therefore I would recommend starting early with this process. It saves you from a lot of stress in the end. I started well in time and didn't encounter any difficulties.
<b>counselling &amp; support at Utrecht University</b>
The counselling & support at Utrecht University is really good. When you have questions about whatsoever you can always reach the international officer of your region. They will help you the best they can. During my time in Guadalajara I still had some questions about credits and stuff, and I could email them and they helped me really good. Just ask for help and people will reach out to you.
<b>academic preparation</b>
I did my exchange at the very end of my bachelor so I had basically all the academic preparation I could have. I don't feel it's that necessary to have a lot of academic preparation since the level of education in Mexico is lower than in the Netherlands.
<b>language preparation</b>
Almost all the courses at the UdG are in Spanish, therefore I highly recommend to study some Spanish before you come to Guadalajara. I did a language course in Spain and followed some Spanish courses at Utrecht University.
<b>finances</b>
Living in Mexico is way cheaper than in the Netherlands. You can rent a room for about 200 euros, if you search really well you can find rooms that cost about 150 euros per month. The ticket to Mexico can be expensive, around 800 euros but if you search in time you might find a good deal. I saved up money before I went to Mexico for travels, but during my semester abroad I had my student loan and that was more than enough to live from in Mexico.

<b>STUDY ABROAD PERIOD</b>
<b>study programme (content and organisational issues)</b>
I thoroughly enjoyed the courses in Mexico, there are a lot of courses you can choose from. The teacher are passionate about their subjects and want to teach you also about their culture and country. The first week you can choose your subjects and you can follow a few courses to see which one you like the best. The second week starts university for real and it's not possible to change courses anymore. The organisation of the university is not the same as in the Netherlands, it's not that clear where you need to go to all the time. But my suggestion



is, just keep asking everyone, all the people are willing to help you, so eventually you will get there.
academic quality of education activities
The level of education in Mexico is remarkably lower than in the Netherlands, but don't fool yourself since it's pretty hard work because of the different language. I experienced that the level of the courses was lower but the studyload a bit higher. In other words, there were more little assignments we had to do, in the Netherlands I was used to one big paper and a big exam.
counselling & support at receiving university abroad
The counselling is ok at the university, you get a student buddy you can always contact about questions. They add you on Facebook and you can easily ask questions about everything. The buddies really want to help you. I didn't receive a lot of support from the international officer of Mexico but I also didn't need it. But I can imagine they would help you too if you just ask for it.
transfer of credits
I emailed the board of examiners during my time in Mexico in what way the credits would be transferred. For me it was almost the same amount, but my grades will probably be lower in the Netherlands than the ones I received in Mexico. I can recommend you to email your board of examiners since this can differ per study programme.

## STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme
The first week of university there was a big welcome, this was for all the faculties. There was a mariachi band and free tacos which was fun. You received a t-shirt and a bag. Apart from this it was not really special, it was just a nice way to meet new people and to get to know the university. During the semester you will be invited by a lot of parties, activities and travels by your student buddy. They organise these things for the internationals and it's good fun to join and a great way to meet new people.
accommodation
I found my accommodation through an organisation, Integrate. They have student houses and websites so you can choose already in the Netherlands and you're assured you have a house. Connexion is also an organisation like this. The prices are a little bit higher but the houses are really nice. You can search on their websites to get an impression. You can also choose when you get to Guadalajara, the prices will be a bit lower then but it's a risk because you never know what you will get.
leisure & culture
Mexico has so much culture and there is a lot to do in the country. There are free salsa classes or markets in the city. I travelled a lot with my roommates. The organisations Integrate and Connexion offer a lot of activities so it's easy to meet new people. Trust me, when you get there you won't be alone and there will always be something to do every night.
suggestions/tips
Don't be afraid of the way Mexico comes up in the news, of course the country has it's problems but so has every country. It is by far one of the most beautiful countries I've ever visited, with a rich culture and beautiful nature. The people are also very kind and always want to help you. So I would just say: go go go! But definitely take care and don't take risks.

## CONCLUSIONS

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



I would highly recommend this university and destination abroad. If you speak some Spanish, you can easily flourish here. The country is beautiful and so are the people, the whole atmosphere is great. The university is not super difficult so don't go there for an academic challenge. But definitely go to Mexico if you're looking for a total different culture than what we are used to in the Netherlands.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

Don't hesitate about the safety, it it's fine to go there. But never take risks and keep your head in the game.

Can students contact you for additional info and do you give us permission to put this in the student reports on our website? If yes, please write down how they can get in touch with you (e-mail, Facebook, Instagram etc)

Yes, Charlotte Huijskens is my name so they can find me on facebook. Or they can send me an e-mail to [charlottehuijskens@gmail.com](mailto:charlottehuijskens@gmail.com)

#### Contact details Student Services / International Office

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[www.uu.nl/students/exchange](http://www.uu.nl/students/exchange)



## UU Study Abroad Report Form

faculty/college	Geosciences
level	bachelor's
name study programme	Milieu-Maatschappijwetenschappen

destination city & country	Guadalajara, Mexico
name university abroad	Universidad de Guadalajara
start date	10-01-2019
end date	05-06-2019

You are requested to write on the following topics. Text boxes will expand automatically while typing!

<b>PREPARATION</b>	
exchange application process	<p>The exchange application process was a bit stressful, but definitively doable. Most people planning their exchange don't really know all the exact steps and deadlines when they go into it. However, as time goes by things will become more clear automatically. Just make sure you what you have to and don't procrastinate. A few months before leaving, you will have a pre-departure meeting with all exchange students going to the same region. Since I went to Mexico, this meeting consisted of people going to Latin America in my case. I saw this as a nice opportunity to get in touch with other exchange students going to Mexico. We made a Whatsapp group so we could help each other with questions and uncertainties troughout the application process. I can highly recommend this!</p>
counselling & support at Utrecht University	<p>Support from the UU has been good! Whenever I had questions, Clim (the exchange coordinator Asia and Latin America) was of great help. All other communication with the UU aswell was streamlined and professional.</p>
academic preparation	<p>I used my exchange as an opportunity to learn more about another discipline. I'm studying environment, but in Guadalajara I took courses in economics. This was possible in my specific case as I already had all the necessary points of my program before leaving Utrecht. In general, the academic level of the UdG is not very high. Even if you don't have any knowledge within the regarding discipline, the courses are fairly easy to keep up with, as long as you put in the effort.</p>
language preparation	<p>In order to keep up with courses given in Spanish, I'd say you need a language level of at least B2. Universidad de Guadalajara offers some courses in English, but not a lot, and only I specific faculties. For day to day life, you can come by without knowing Spanish (you'll mostly be around students, who usually speak English), but you'll get less out of your exchange experience. Learning Spanish was one of the mains goal I set for myself. When I came to Mexico, I was somewhere between A2 and B1. And to be honest, in retrospect I wish I was further. People usually tell you that learning a new language will happen 'automatically' if the language is all around you. The truth I witnessed is that the process of learning is still a lot of hard work and dedication. The further you already are in the learning process, the more you will pick up from the Spanish around you. My advice: really push yourself to get as far as possible with your Spanish before leaving to your exchange. The learning will go exponentially quicker the better you already are. When you are able to watch a movie in Spanish (without English subtitles) and understand most of it, you're well on your way. You have the opportunity here to really learn a language, use it.</p>
finances	



Mexico is cheap, but not free. Expect to pay between 150 – 250 euro a month for a room. Another 100 for food and some more for nightlife. A good thing to add: Exchange students love to travel and it's a great opportunity to do so. Try to put aside some money so you will be able to join your new international friends on weekend trips and spring break holidays.

### STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)

The organizational structure of the Universidad de Guadalajara gives you a lot of freedom in choosing courses. You can do any course from any faculty. Whether or not it fits your program in the Netherlands is your own responsibility. I choose a course called 'Creative Cooking', which was amazing.

academic quality of education activities

The academic level at the public University of Guadalajara is generally lower than in Utrecht. The quality of particular courses depends all on the specific teacher. Teachers have complete freedom in setting up their own courses. Some are great, but others not so much.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

The UdG has a good support system for exchange students. You will be assigned to a particular exchange coordinator who will personally help you with any questions.

transfer of credits

Still in process at the time of writing

### STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

There is a university-wide introduction day, which welcomes you to the university, the city and to Mexico. Furthermore, there are several introductory moments in the first weeks. The UdG makes sure you will know how everything works.

accommodation

In Guadalajara, there are two big organizations that offer housing for exchange students: Conexion and Integrate. Both are easily found with a quick Google search. With these organizations, you will end up in a house with 6 – 20 other exchange students, mostly European. The dominant language in the house will be English and you'll pay around 250 euro a month (which is a lot). However, you will have a lot of (European) parties and plenty of opportunities to meet new (European) people. You get the message: if you just want to have a fun time and don't mind paying a bit more to get there, this is a great option. If you're looking for something a bit more 'Mexican', want to meet more Mexicans and/or want to pay less, look for something else. People who choose the second option usually just go and spent their first week in a hostel. There is an abundance of houses available in the city, so if you ask around a bit you will always find something. There are lots of beautiful, greatly located houses for 150 euro a month, with nice mixes of Mexican and European roommates.

leisure & culture

Mexico is a very open and warm culture. People tend to be very social, always open for some small talk. They are not a reserved people. Especially towards foreigners, people are very curious and quick to approach. Don't be surprised when a stranger randomly walks up to you in a shopping mall, they're just curious what you're doing there!

suggestions/tips



Mexico is absolutely wonderful in every way, but the best thing about the country is probably its people. Mexicans almost seem to have a sense of collective responsibility to show foreigners the beauty of their country. My advice: Gratefully accept this hospitality and be open for new experiences. When someone recommends you a certain dish: try it! When someone recommends you a cool place: check it out! When a group of Mexicans invite you for a night out: go with them! You'll have the best time.

Two practical tips:

- 1) Uber is BY FAR the easiest way to get around, and everyone around you will use it. Save yourself some money by already installing it before arriving in Mexico, and using it to get from the Airport to the city centre.
- 2) Eat as many street tacos as you can! Street vendors offer you delicious tacos for less than 0,50 euro a piece. If you want to mix it up: UberEats is incredibly cheap in Mexico. You have a meal for 2,50, which is often cheaper than cooking for yourself with ingredients from the supermarket (which have Dutch prices). When you do cook, go to a local market. It's cheaper than anything else, and you support locals instead of big franchises like Walmart.

## CONCLUSIONS

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

Absolutely. Mexico is surprising in every way. The weather is around 25 degrees year round. Life is cheap, food delicious and people amazing. The education might not be of the highest academic level, but teachers have a great deal of personal attention for their students, offering a very dynamic and interactive learning experience.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

Good luck with your choice! You can always contact me for further questions

Can students contact you for additional info and do you give us permission to put this in the student reports on our website? If yes, please write down how they can get in touch with you (e-mail, Facebook, Instagram etc)

I give permission to put this in the student reports on the website. People can contact me through Instagram: @Sakekolhoff

### Contact details Student Services / International Office

Visitors' address: Bestuursgebouw, Heidelberglaan 6, Utrecht

+31-(0)30-253 7000

[exchange@uu.nl](mailto:exchange@uu.nl) (information/questions)

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[students.uu.nl/exchange](http://students.uu.nl/exchange)



## UU Study Abroad Report Form

Faculty/college:	UCR
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	Guadalajara, Mexico
Name host institution and/or company/organisation	Universidad de Guadalajara
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)	12/06/2016
Return date (dd/mm/yyyy)	01/01/2017

### Preparation

Exchange/placement application process:

Since I am a UCR student I had to apply to the UCR board of examiners first, after that to UU itself and after that to UdeG itself. If you got past the UU step, stop worrying, you are in. They ALWAYS accept the students, according to the guy in charge at UdeG.

Counselling/support at home university:

None gotten, none needed. UCR is not very talkative, when I did need its help do to credit translation problems, help was very scarce. Not a UCR strong suit.

Academic preparation:

I had already finished all my requirements to graduate, except for those that I would do when I returned, so I could do whatever I wanted there. But in any case, its Mexico, they really, really don't care there about lots of things.

Language preparation:

I had taken 2 classes of Spanish, bringing me to the international level of A2 (officially, in reality it was worse). I talked to my professor to persuade her to make my Spanish skills appear nicer than they are so that UdeG would accept me, but the language proficiency thingy she wrote for me only described the sad truth, that I did not really speak allot of Spanish, definitely not B1 level, (which is normally required for Spanish universities in Latin America). But in the end, its Mexico, and Mexico does not care. So I got to go, and they never asked, and never would have nor ever will, about my Spanish skills. I did learn some extra Spanish by traveling around for 3 months in Mexico and Guatamala before, but I mostly just spoke English.

Finances:

I missed a subletting opportunity, so I had to arrange one myself, which worked out. With that



fixed, money was no issue whatsoever. I travelled for 3 months in Mexico and a bit in Guatemala, I went on trips to other places around Guadalajara, ate out in sometimes fancy restaurants, and the whole ordeal was still cheaper than just staying in the Netherlands would have been. I payed 2000 pesos for my room a month, which is 100 euros. Since everything else is also very cheap, I think I spent about 200 euros a month to study there. But the traveling was more expensive, and trips and such. DO NOT PAY MORE than 3000 (150 euros) pesos for a room! That's a high price. Normal rooms in the centre should be between 2000 (low) to 3000 (high) pesos. Most people find their room via Facebook or <http://www.compartodepa.com.mx>.

There are many exchange students in Guadalajara, and the landlords know it, hence the 3000 pesos for certain rooms. 2600 would be a normal price I think.

For flights use SkyScanner, select a whole month, not a specific day, and check from Amsterdam, Brussels and Colonia (keulen), they offer the cheapest flights to Cancun, from Cancun you can find flights to Guadalajara, or travel overland, but that takes a few (2?) months if you want to be a tourist on the way. The flights can be as cheap as 180 euros. But more likely you will find something around 300 in higher seasons. Try not to fly over the US without a us visa, they might give you shit there.

**Study/placement abroad period**

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

Academic quality of education/placement activities:

Varies, you have about 2-4 weeks, I believe, to select and change courses at the start of the semester. And you can probably still change after that (I did). The websites are useless, use the pieces of papers put up all around the uni on different departments. Go check out the courses, look mostly at the teacher! Then choose. But you can probably change.

Counselling/support at host institution/organisation:

Pretty good, any Mexican will help you. They are very, very helpful people. Garrett at the exchange department is a great and helpful guy. You get a tutor as well, who will help you and take you places if you want him her to do so.

Transfer of credits:

UU students: I am pretty sure you need 30 credits, which is about 4 courses (courses value 7 to 8 average depending on the department). UCR student? Too bad, you will need 50 credits for no good reason. I had to do 6 courses, all of them 8 or 9 credits to get enough. Just talk to the teachers about it, they will take it into account and give you less work. At UCR they will also take off 1 full grade from you Mexico grade (9->8 etc.) I believe. UU, I wouldn't know. But it is very easy to get high grades. I got 10 for 3 courses, 2 of which I did nothing for whatsoever. If you go to all the clases, or most, they will like you and give you good grades. You can also if you fail a course, talk to the teacher afterwards, you have a 1 week period in which you can negotiate and do more work to still pass a failed course. Failing a course in UdG is very hard.

**Student life**

Welcome/orientation programme:

UdG will assign you a tutor, you and around 9 other students. The tutor is an older student who



also went on exchange himself, he she will help you if you have any questions. There is one introduction day for the university where there is some food, speeches, free t-shirt and some propaganda. We were also honoured with some mariachi, which was very nice.

Accommodation:

I went there with the terrific idea to find a room when I get there. I started looking for one about 5 days before the introduction day started. I agreed to living in 3 houses, and backed out of two of them in succession. I ended up living in a really cool house for 2000 pesos a month. My room was referred to as "the cave", it was partly underground and did not have any windows. But the house also had nice rooms for 2300 pesos, there were just full.

You will most likely live with at least one exchange student, mostly French or German students. But most of them try to speak Spanish all the time, so that's nice.

You will be able to find a room while being in Guadalajara itself, just don't wait too long. Start earlier than I did! 2 weeks beforehand would be a lot better.

I lived in "Colonia Americana" which is a really nice neighbourhood. Safe and very hip. Very alternative. The closer you move to Chapultepec (the main nightlife avenue) the more expensive it gets. The best area in Americana is around Plaza Expiatorio, which has nice markets and small events.

Leisure/culture:

Lots and lots of good food. Really cheap. The food is very distinct, but very meaty and cheesy. You can be a vegetarian quite easily (even the best restaurants are quite cheap), and its possible to be vegan, especially around Plaza Expiatorio. Guadalajara is not super beautiful, but it has lots of activities and a nice alternative scene. You can also go on weekend trips to other places, but Guadalajara takes about 2 hours to leave by bus.

Suggestions/tips:

Don't take a house too far away from the centre, it can be quite dodgy out there. The inner city is very safe by day, at night I walked around alone, and girls did as well. But depending on where you live, you might want to take an Uber instead (only about 1 euro a trip within the inner city, so no huge expense). If you do walk around at night, stick to the big roads, if there is beggars sleeping in the roads that means that its safe, they seek out the safe places to sleep there. I wouldn't live in a Connexion house or something like it, with all the other exchange students. That's for if you want to learn French or German instead. Don't worry about the Spanish.

Also, negotiate! Definitely with the teachers! I talked to all of my teachers about my situation with Spanish and wanting to do other things than just study, and all of them understood. I ended up answering my Spanish exam questions in English. And the teachers gave me allot of slack when I needed it. You can reduce the workload by 60% if need be.

**Conclusions**

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

Yes. If you are a UCR student you will have a bit more work on your hands, but it's still not allot. Mexicans are extremely sweet people. They just are very, very noisy to Dutch standards. And their taste in music is questionable. But Guadalajara is very nice! Very different, and very cheap. I had an amazing time. To be honest, I think you can have an amazing time wherever you go, but Mexico is a nice balance between in and out of your comfort zone. Guadalajara is modern and traditional at



the same time.

Do you have any additional advice or comments?:

Go on exchange, Mexico is amazing, I suppose other places are as well, but I would at least take this opportunity to go far! Also, travel before and after the exchange! Guadalajara also has some pretty cool courses, if you know where to look. Anyway, have fun!

### **Contact details Student Services / International Office**

Visitors' address: Bestuursgebouw, Heidelberglaan 6, Utrecht

+31-(0)30-253 7000

[exchange@qdesk.uu.nl](mailto:exchange@qdesk.uu.nl) (information) / [verslagen.internationaloffice@uu.nl](mailto:verslagen.internationaloffice@uu.nl) (report)

[www.uu.nl/students/exchange](http://www.uu.nl/students/exchange)



## UU Study Abroad Report Form

Faculty/college:	Geesteswetenschappen
Level:	bachelor
Name degree programme:	Liberal Arts and Sciences

Destination city & country	Guadalajara, Mexico
Name host institution and/or company/organisation	Universidad de Guadalajara
Purpose of exchange	Study/courses
Departure date (dd/mm/yyyy)	August 1 <sup>st</sup> 2016
Return date (dd/mm/yyyy)	January 15 <sup>th</sup> 2017

### Preparation

Exchange/placement application process:

For the exchange application process, I had to submit a language certificate, a Spanish CV, a motivation letter and a bunch of stuff for the UU. It was quite lengthy but not difficult at all. Just ask someone in your circle of acquaintances that speaks Spanish to help you with your CV and you will be fine. If you don't have anyone that can help you, just use Google Translate. It's not perfect but no one expects you to speak Spanish fluently before you go there.

Counselling/support at home university:

The UU was very supportive in the application process. It's a lot but not difficult at all.

Academic preparation:

I did very little for the academic preparation

Language preparation:

In high school I had the chance to follow Spanish, so I had a very basic knowledge of the language.

Finances:

I spent 8000 euros in 7 months. Everything was super cheap but I travelled every weekend and in the last two months I was also backpacking through the country. Food and drinks are super cheap and I took an über everywhere

### Study/placement abroad period

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

The first day of Uni was all about choosing courses. They will help you with this. Before you go they assign you a buddy. Contact this person beforehand so he or she can help you choosing courses.

Academic quality of education/placement activities:

The academic quality is definitely lower than at the UU. The courses were very interactive. There



was not one course that I could sit still and quiet.

Counselling/support at host institution/organisation:

Of course in Mexico nothing is as organised as in Holland, but you do get helpful answers to your questions.

Transfer of credits:

I am still in the process of transferring my credits, but considering that people before me went to the same uni and didn't have problems transferring their credits I don't think it will be a problem.

### **Student life**

Welcome/orientation programme:

I would recommend people to join one of the many the international students exchange programmes called Conexion or Integrate. They organise housing, parties and trips. If you live in one of their houses it doesn't mean you have to go to everything, you're still free to do whatever you want with your time. For me it was a very good experience to join Conexion. I have never felt lonely or helpless or unsafe because with those groups I also made many Mexican friends that helped me with things I needed help with.

Accommodation:

It's very easy to find houses, (see my previous answer about Conexion or Integrate) just with google or facebook you can find accommodation easily.

Leisure/culture:

As I said before, I travelled a lot! I feel like Mexico is a country that truly has it all. White beaches with light blue sea, surf beaches, mountains, jungle, waterfalls, beautiful cities, cute villages, super super friendly people! Mexico has a lot of problems, but the people worry less. They always help you with a smile!

Suggestions/tips:

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

Definitely! Just look at my previous answers. I had the best time of my life. I wouldn't trade my time there for the world. It is so different than the Netherlands and this experience is exactly what made me more excited and curious to other countries. I completely fell in love with Mexico. After my studies I hope to find a job there!

### **Conclusions**

Go to Mexico. Enjoy every moment of it and don't worry too much ;)

Do you have any additional advice or comments?:

Since it is quite a dangerous country. Don't do stupid stuff. Always check if your uber is actually yours, always go home with friends, let them know you are home etcetera!



## UU Study Abroad Report Form

Faculty/college:	School of Governance
Level:	X bachelor <input type="checkbox"/> master <input type="checkbox"/> PhD <input type="checkbox"/> other
Name degree programme:	Public Administration and Governance

Destination city & country	Guadalajara, Mexico
Name host institution and/or company/organisation	Universidad de Guadalajara
Purpose of exchange	X study/courses <input type="checkbox"/> work placement <input type="checkbox"/> field work <input type="checkbox"/> other
Departure date (dd/mm/yyyy)	10 / 01 / 2016
Return date (dd/mm/yyyy)	22 / 07 / 2016

### Preparation

Exchange/placement application process:

I really wanted to go to a country in Latin America. At the time I had to make a choice, there were only 3 options: Chile, Costa Rica and México. Because the places were limited in Chile and Costa Rica, I chose México.

Counselling/support at home university:

In the beginning it seems like you have to do a lot to get accepted, but when you have finished all the paper work, the International office will do all the work for you. They are also really helpful and respond quickly to emails you send to them.

Academic preparation:

The Universidad de Guadalajara doesn't ask any preparation other than language preparation.

Language preparation:

One of the reasons I wanted to go to Latin America was to practice my Spanish. I was already following a course at Instituto Cervantes before I went to Mexico, and finished level B2. I discovered that it was really helpful speaking Spanish. Not only you can follow the classes, but also for making friends. Mexicans are really open and kind but in general they don't speak English. So when you arrive and you're already able to speak to them, even if it is with a lot of mistakes, it will make your stay a lot more pleasant.

Finances:

Mexico isn't expensive, for example: my rent was about 150 euros per month. You can eat food in the streets (which is really good!) and it will cost you around 2 or 3 euros. Only the flight is expensive, try to book it in advance. I would recommend you to go from Germany to Cancun, and then from Cancun to Guadalajara. Another way is to go to Houston, and then to Guadalajara or Ciudad de Mexico. Traveling in Mexico isn't that cheap, the distances are long so sometimes you



have to go by plain which is a little bit more expensive than in Europe. If you go by bus, a drive of 10 hours will cost around 50 euros. Try to save money to travel, because it is worth it!

### **Study/placement abroad period**

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

When you arrive in Mexico, you can choose whatever course you want to do. It doesn't matter if you study medicine and you would like to follow courses of history. The only thing you should take in account is that not all the faculties are close to one another. The first two weeks you can try every course you want and after that time you decide which ones you want to follow. The level of the course depends a lot on the teacher. Try to ask the students which teachers are good and which are bad, so you can make a better decision which courses to follow.

Academic quality of education/placement activities:

As I already explained, it depends on the teacher. I followed 4 classes, from which 2 had a really high level, and 2 a really low. I read that the teachers give high grades, even if you don't attend all the classes or write all the essays, but in my case this was different. 2 Of my classes were pretty hard and the level was high, you had to hand in an essay every week and also prepare what you were going to say. Some teachers are really nice about the fact that exchange students often still have difficulties with Spanish, but my teachers weren't. So when I made a mistake in Spanish, they gave me a lower grade. On the other hand, these 2 classes I enjoyed the most because I learned a lot. But try to ask around, every student knows which teacher is good and which one is bad.

Counselling/support at host institution/organisation:

When you arrive the University will assign you to a tutor, who's also a student. He or she will help you with everything, not only study related. They will take you around the city, and sometimes even on trips. For more practical questions about the University you can always contact Gareth Bennett, he helps the exchange students from Europa and is really nice. You also don't have to worry about your Spanish because his English is really good.

Transfer of credits:

When you're in Mexico you will find out that it is not that organized as we are used to. Some teachers emailed me my grades, but at the moment I am still waiting for the others.

### **Student life**

Welcome/orientation programme:

When you arrive, there will be a welcome meeting where they explain about the University. Also your tutor will show you around and you are assigned to a group of exchange students. But since it is really easy to meet new people I didn't do a lot with my tutor. I found that the students are really nice and open to help and invite you, so you definitely don't need to worry about that.

Accommodation:

Finding a house is really easy, I would recommend searching on facebook (casas en Guadalajara). There are 2 organizations for exchange students, they also own houses; Conexion and Integrate. I lived in an amazing house, really close to CUCSH, called: Pedro Loza 868. I lived with 6 students, Mexicans and internationals, and we did a lot together.

Leisure/culture:

Mexico is just amazing! I didn't know much about the country and had only heard the bad stories



about it being dangerous and the drugs war. But it is an amazing country, with so much to discover and offer! The nature (I recommend la Huasteca Potosina) and all the beaches (Sayulita, Puerto Vallarta and Cancun) are so beautiful! It is definitely worth it to travel around as much as you can! Also the people are indescribable kind. Mexicans will invite you to their houses, to family parties, I even went to a Mexican wedding! They want to show you their culture and take you to Mexican 'fiestas' where you will learn to dance Banda or Cumbia or they take you to eat at the nicest taco places. I can't describe how wonderful my experience in Mexico was. You should definitely see it for yourself!

Suggestions/tips:

Try to speak Spanish before you arrive and try to connect with the locals, they will show you the 'real' Mexico. Don't be afraid but try to be conscious about the fact that Mexico isn't Europe and it is a lot more dangerous. DON'T go alone in the streets at night, take your phone always with you and download the UBER application so you don't have to go with the cabs. Listen to the locals about where you can go and where you can't go walking around alone. I lived in the center, which isn't the safest part of town. The area around Chapultepec is safer and also really nice to live. If you would like to take some extra Spanish classes you can contact: Yolanda +52 13311308925

**Conclusions**

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

YES! I would definitely recommend going to Mexico! It was one of the best experiences of my life. I can't wait to go back to Mexico and travel around some more. You will get to know an amazing and different world, which you will always remember.

Do you have any additional advice or comments?:

Don't listen to all the horror stories about Mexico, but try to be smart and conscious. Listen to the locals and nothing will happen.



## UU Study Abroad Report Form

Faculty/college:	UU Geo Sciences
Level:	bachelor
Name degree programme:	Environmental sciences

Destination city & country	Guadalajara, Mexico
Name host institution and/or company/organisation	Universidad de Guadalajara
Purpose of exchange	study/courses
Departure date (dd/mm/yyyy)	07-08-2015
Return date (dd/mm/yyyy)	30-01-2016

### Preparation

Exchange/placement application process:

This all went quite easy, the person from UDG arranged everything and the sign up process is easy. You just need to collect the right forms and upload them on the site they give you. You also choose the courses you want to do before you go. But when you are there you do that again and some courses probably are gone and other new ones appear. But this is no problem because you can switch courses in the first two weeks. There are also 6 english courses you can follow on the university. I did this, but I kind of regret it because it would have been possible just to take the Spanish courses. You learn the language really quick and the teachers are really chill and forgiving. They are really happy you try to learn Spanish so they are forgiving for this. And you can also take a Spanish language course on the university.

Counselling/support at home university:

The international office of UU also was very helpful. All went smooth

Academic preparation:

You also choose the courses you want to do before you go. But when you are there you do that again and some courses probably are gone and other new ones appear. But this is no problem because you can switch courses in the first two weeks. There are also 6 english (economy) courses you can follow on the university. I did this, but I kinda regret it because it would have been possible just to take the Spanish courses. You learn the language really quick and the teachers are really chill and forgiving, so definitely take at least some courses in Spanish!

Language preparation:

I took a course on the Cervantes institute in Utrecht, level 1.1. It is helpful and you pick the language up quicker when you are there. I also arrived a week earlier so I could practice already. I



did make the mistake of going to Cancun where there are a lot of tourists. If you go live with a family where they only speak Spanish you learn it fast.

Finances:

The room was 150 euro each month and the flight was 900 in total. And food and transport are really cheap compared to the Netherlands. Just the fact that life is so cheap and everything is nice and you go away on weekends makes you spend more. So in the end you spend the same as in Utrecht.

**Study/placement abroad period**

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

I did 5 courses and I got 7.5 ECTS from every course but I think with other faculties on UU you get less so check that so you get no surprises.

Academic quality of education/placement activities:

The education is not as good as in Utrecht, but this is logical. If you go to class and do your homework then everything will be fine

Counselling/support at host institution/organisation:

There were several desks and everything went quite smooth. No long waiting as I anticipated before.

Transfer of credits:

Easy, you receive them from the University of Guadalajara and then you sent them to your own faculty

**Student life**

Welcome/orientation programme:

Really fun, first day a big and fun welcome speech for all internationals and immediately after there was mariachi and dancing. The Mexican people know how to be happy and this was a good sign for how the rest of the exchange was going to be. Amazing

Accommodation: I found a house when I went there, first week in a hostel. There are facebookpages where you can find normal houses, it is really easy to find a apartment in Guadalajara close to the center. There are two organisations for international students (connexion and intergrate) which have big party houses with internationals who live there. They also organize weekends and I definitely advise to go the weekends, especially the first one of Conexion which is a beach festival. <http://www.conexionmexico.com.mx/>

Leisure/culture:

There are a lot of national holidays. And there is always a party somewhere on these days, look into that. The Mexicans really know how to enjoy life and they will invite you quite easily to their house for dinner or some party. They are very welcoming and helpful people. They are relaxed and yes this also means they can arrive late, it is part of the culture. When you make an appointment with someone, re-check the appointment the day before. Time is more fluid and they also really know how to not stress about small things.



**Conclusions/suggestions**

The cultural festival in Guanajuato is amazing. I definitely recommend anyone to go to this place. Go here and have a good time. Guadalajara is a big city with anything you need, but it feels like a village because it is spreaded, no high rise buildings and little busy roads.

You will learn so much of the Mexicans and the amazing food nature and culture. Every day is like being on holiday even though you go to school or work. The uni starts at 15 august and ends 11 december, so then you still have 2 months to travel around before uni starts in the Netherlands

If you have more questions then please contact me

## Mijn uitwisseling in Guadalajara

Dit verhaal is waarschijnlijk enigszins anders dan jullie gewend zijn van ‘normale’ uitwisselingsverhalen. Niet omdat ik het niet leuk heb gehad – oh nee, integendeel. Heb ik dan weinig geleerd? Ook dat is niet aan de orde. Wáár en waarover ik veel geleerd heb is echter een tweede.

In januari begon ik met mijn uitwisseling aan de universiteit van Guadalajara, Mexico. De introductie van de universiteit was erg leuk; er werd gedanst, gezongen, er werden grapjes gemaakt, speeches gehouden en een paar leuke voorbeelden gegeven van de Mexicaanse cultuur. Ik voelde me direct thuis en gelukkig met dit warme ontvangst. Diezelfde week begonnen de inschrijvingen voor de vakken, en dat... ging een beetje anders dan bij ons in Utrecht. Bij iedere faculteit (waar er ca. 10 van zijn) hing een groot bord met alle vakken, alle tijden waarop deze vakken gegeven zouden worden en alle verschillende professoren die deze vakken zouden geven. En ik zeg je, dat waren er véél. Voor sommige vakken kon je soms wel tussen 5 professoren kiezen. Het idee was dat je van faculteit naar faculteit moest lopen om te kijken welke vakken je precies wilde volgen, de tijden waarop je dit wilde doen en de professor bij wie je dit wilde doen. Daarna stelde je je eigen rooster samen. Wat meer moeite dan ik gewend was, maar ik besef me dan ook dat wij wel erg verwend zijn met voorzieningen als *Blackboard* en *Osiris*. En daarbij, het belangrijkste is: uiteindelijk werkt het. Een aantal uren puzzelen later was het me gelukt om een rooster voor mezelf in elkaar te flansen met vakken die mij leuk leken. Het semester zou de week erna al beginnen en ik had er zin in! Wat ik als non-insider echter niet wist, was dat het kiezen van de juiste professoren een érg belangrijk aspect was bij het kiezen van vakken. Aangezien ik dat al niet eens wist, is het logisch dat ik geen idee had wie ik had gekozen.

Vol goede moed kwam ik de week erop aan op de universiteit. Ik volgde trouw m'n vakken en merkte dat ik de tranquiliteit waarmee de vakken gegeven werden me wel aansprak. Het was wel eens vervelend, als je om 6:00 was opgestaan omdat je om 7:00 les had en de leraar kwam zelf pas om 8:00 aanzetten, maar gelukkig ben ik zelf ook niet de moeilijkste en kon dit alles voor mij met een glimlach onder ‘cultuurverschil’ worden geschaard. Wat ik echter wel lastig vond, was dat de leraren soms weinig gemotiveerd leken om les te geven. Er vielen af en toe doodse stiltes in de lessen, omdat de leraar zelf niks meer te vertellen had. Ook de literatuur die ik moest lezen vond ik soms weinig passend bij waar de lessen over gingen. Maar ik ging gestaag door.

De eerste week had ik 8 vakken gekozen, met het idee er na die week 4 te laten vallen. Dit is wat ongeveer alle uitwisselingsstudenten doen, dit geeft je de mogelijkheid om een klein beetje te ‘proeven’ van ieder vak om daarna door te gaan met vakken die je echt leuk vindt. In eerste instantie was het niet zo'n opgave om de 4 vakken te kiezen waar ik mee door wilde gaan..., Maar naarmate het semester vorderde nam het plezier om lessen te volgen af en zat ik met tegenzin in de les. Toen werd

het erg lastig om zelfs nog deze 4 vakken te behouden. Het grootste struikelblok voor me was dat ik het gevoel had dat ik bijna niets nieuws leerde, ik voelde me zo nutteloos. Natuurlijk was ik niet naar Mexico gekomen met het idee dat ik als een Einstein terug zou komen en wist ik ook wel dat het niveau van onderwijs lager ligt dan bij ons in Nederland, maar toch zat het me niet lekker. Wat ook vervelend was, was dat er voor de lessen die ik had gekozen heel veel huiswerk gemaakt moest worden, wat meetelde voor het eindcijfer. Héél veel huiswerk. En je kunt je vast voorstellen dat dit niet echt van harte gaat wanneer je vakken hebt waarvan je het gevoel hebt weinig te leren.

Semana Santa, de vakantie die midden in het semester valt en twee weken duurt, was aangebroken en ik had mijn zinnen gezet op het zo goed mogelijk benutten van de tijd om te gaan reizen in het zuiden van Mexico. Na de eerste week merkte ik dat ik me al zoveel beter en vrijer voelde dan tijdens de lessen in Guadalajara, en dat gevoel werd alleen maar sterker naarmate ik langer reisde. Ik kreeg mijn gedachten wat beter op een rijtje en wist weer waarom ik hier was gekomen: om te genieten en te leren. In welke vorm dan ook. Tijdens de tweede week van mijn reis had ik het besluit genomen om niet meer terug te keren naar de lessen waar ik met tegenzin heenging. Ik verlengde mijn reis met twee weken en ik dacht na over de opties die ik zou hebben wanneer ik weer terug in Guadalajara zou zijn. Uiteindelijk besloot ik mijn tijd hier te vullen met vrijwilligerswerk. Na Semana Santa ben ik aan de slag gegaan bij Amnesty International, waar ik nu iedere dag als vrijwilligster op kantoor zit en wat me goed bevalt. Ik heb het gevoel dat ik veel leer en dat dit veel bijdraagt aan mijn persoonlijke ontwikkeling. Ondanks dat het een lastige en vrij ongebruikelijke beslissing was, ben ik blij dat ik hem genomen heb.

Wat ik nog graag wil benadrukken, is dat de Universiteit van Guadalajara zeker geen slechte school is. Er zijn ontzettend interessante lessen te volgen, gegeven door prachtleraren die vol passie over hun vak vertellen. Helaas had ik gewoon net pech wat betreft de vakken met bijbehorende leraren die ik gekozen had. Mijn tip aan studenten die aan de Universiteit van Guadalajara gaan studeren is dan ook: vraag voor je je inschrijft voor vakken goed na bij welke leraar je dit moet doen. Je Mexicaanse medestudenten zijn heel open en willen je dolgraag helpen als je het vraagt. Het kost misschien een beetje moeite in het begin om alles uit te zoeken en het juiste advies te vinden, maar is het zeker waard op de lange termijn!

Verder is Guadalajara een geweldige stad en kan ik het absoluut aanraden hier een uitwisseling te doen! Veel lol, een bruisend netwerk van vrienden en een fantastische tijd gegarandeerd!



## 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:	Spanish Language and Culture

Destination city & country	Guadalajara, Mexico
Name host institution and/or company/organisation	University of Guadalajara
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)	06/08/2014
Return date (dd/mm/yyyy)	19/03/2015

### Preparation

Exchange/placement application process:

I thought the application process was really extensive. You have to fill in so much forms and upload all kinds of signed documents, that in the end you lose all track of the situation. Therefore I recommend everyone to start your application really early because it involves a lot of work.

Counselling/support at home university:

The people at the International Office are really friendly and they try to help you with everything. But, with respect to the contact person specialized in Latin America, I believe she wasn't an expert on the subject. I had some really specific questions about subjects and credits, but she didn't know anything about this. I really had the sense that she only knew the global picture, but that she couldn't answer questions specifically about the University of Guadalajara. I therefore think that, if you got some really specific questions, it'll be a better idea to reach out to the contact person from the University of Guadalajara himself.

Academic preparation:

If you choose to go and study at the University of Guadalajara, and you have studied for at least one year at the University of Utrecht, I think there is absolutely no need to worry about your academic skills, that is to say that the level of education at the universities in Mexico is a lot worse than that we're used to here in Holland. Even though you might not understand Spanish that well, you'll still be able to keep up with the classes and the exams are really easy. So I think that if you already have studied for at least one year at a Dutch university, extra academic preparation won't be necessary.

Language preparation:

Even though I've been studying Spanish for many years now (first at high school, that at the



university), I knew before that I couldn't speak Spanish that well. When I arrived in Mexico, I noticed that I couldn't speak it at all. I could understand a bit, but the people talk so fast and the accent is really different from what you learn at school, so speaking it yourself is really difficult. So the first week I only spoke English, but while living there and being with other people that only speak Spanish, you learn it really easy and really fast. I think it took me like 2 months to speak Spanish fluently.

Finances:

The downside of not studying in Europe is that you don't get a study grant like the Erasmus students. But this doesn't make Mexico a more expensive destination, because the life there (food, public transport, clothes) is really really cheap. The only thing that was a bit expensive maybe was the flight. But I think that's the only expensive thing, because as a already said, every other thing is a lot cheaper than in Europe.

### **Study/placement abroad period**

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

For me it was really easy to fit in the Mexican subjects into my study programme here at the UU, because it formed part of my "profileringsruimte", so I could choose every subject I wanted. Before I went, I checked the university website to choose my subjects, but in the end half of the subjects I picked didn't exist anymore. But, luckily, the first two weeks we had the time to visit all the classes we thought interesting and then after that we could decide. But after all, it's no problem if after that you want to change another time. After a month of classes I changed a subject and this was no problem at all.

Academic quality of education/placement activities:

The quality of the education in Mexico isn't like that in the Netherlands. The classes were really easy and superficial. We only read an article and then there followed a discussion, but we didn't explore the material or deepen into it. Moreover, I never made homework and I skipped a lot of classes, only the last week I studied the whole week to write my essays and then I got a 9 or a 10 for everything.

Counselling/support at host institution/organisation:

The people of the "Intercambio" at the University of Guadalajara were also really friendly. The first day there's a welcome meeting and they explain you everything. After that if you still have questions, you can visit their office every day and they help you wherever they can. In addition to this, at my faculty (CUCSH) they appointed (already in July when I still was in Holland) me a tutor (an older Mexican student), and I could ask him anything I wanted. These tutors (Intercucsh) also organize parties, expeditions and walking tours through Guadalajara to show you the city centre.

Transfer of credits:

Until now (half June) I haven't registered my Mexican subjects yet, so I honestly can't say anything about this subject.

### **Student life**

Welcome/orientation programme:

The first day we had a welcome meeting about being an international student at the University of



Guadalajara in general. After that, we had another welcome meeting but then at your own faculty. They explained everything very clear and after that the tutors of Intercucsh helped us a lot. It was nice to have this welcome programme because we immediately got to know a lot of other international students.

Accommodation:

It was really easy to find a nice and cheap house in Guadalajara. The city is huge and the offer of houses is enormous, there's a lot more available than in Utrecht for example. Before I went, I looked on the internet for a house and I talked with a friend who already went to Mexico, and then I decided to make a reservation for a room in a Conexión house. This is an organisation that rents rooms in houses with only international students. If you compare it with other houses, Conexión is a bit more expensive, and I could have waited till I arrived in Guadalajara and then I could have looked there for a cheaper room, but I just wanted it all arranged before I went there. I think that if you're looking for a nice house with a lot of other international students, and you like parties and trips with other people, Conexión is a real good option. It helps you to get to know a lot of people immediately and the houses have a nice location.

Leisure/culture:

Mexico is a great country. Because the university isn't that hard and you don't have a lot of homework, you got a lot of free time and you can travel the whole country (like I did). Mexico is really beautiful and the culture is great. The people are really friendly, there's a lot of great food in the whole country, travelling is cheap (fantastic hostels for only 5 euros) and there are a lot of good bus connexions through the whole country.

Suggestions/tips:

If you don't have any restrictions with your study programme, I would advise you to go the first semester. You'll get all the holidays and national feasts (Día de la Independencia, Día de los Muertos) and there are a lot more international students and a lot more parties and trips in the first semester than there are in the second.

**Conclusions**

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

I definitely would!! I really love Mexico so maybe I'm a bit prejudiced, but it really is a great country and living and studying there, in a whole different culture with other habits and traditions can only enrich your life and be an amazing experience. Here in Europe we only get in contact with Mexico through the news and this nearly always gives us a negative view of the country, related to the drugs war, violence and crime. Please don't let this scare you off!! Of course there is a drugs war going on, and there are people getting killed, but this only involves people related to the drugs world. Innocent people are rarely hurt. It only concerns people connected with the drugs gangs. Apart from that, Mexico is a beautiful country with friendly people and it is just as dangerous as Europe or Holland. I mean, for example when you're a girl and you're on your one at night in a deserted alley in Amsterdam in a suspicious neighbourhood, that's just as dangerous!

Do you have any additional advice or comments?:

Not really.. I would just say: please go to Mexico, it's the best decision you can make!



## UU Study Abroad Report Form

faculty/college	Humanities
Level	X bachelor <input type="checkbox"/> master <input type="checkbox"/> PhD <input type="checkbox"/> other
name degree programme	Liberal arts and sciences

destination city & country	Guadalajara, Mexico
name host institution and/or company/organization	Universidad de Guadalajara
purpose of exchange	X study/courses <input type="checkbox"/> work placement <input type="checkbox"/> field work <input type="checkbox"/> other
departure date (dd/mm/yyyy)	25 / 07 / 2014
return date (dd/mm/yyyy)	14 / 01 / 2015

### preparation

#### exchange/placement application process

For the application I had to write a (short) motivation letter, have a proof of Spanish proficiency (Spanish language school diploma), translate my official academic transcript and cv into Spanish and send a photocopy of my passport.

#### counselling/support at home university

Our contact person from the international office (Laura van der Linde) was always willing to help and answer my questions when I had doubts.

#### academic preparation

-

#### language preparation

In secondary school I had three years of Spanish classes and after that I took a language course in Spain for three months, so I already had some knowledge of Spanish. Initially, I wanted to take a Spanish course before leaving as well but in the end I didn't have time for it. That's why I just practised a bit by studying words and reading in Spanish. At first it was difficult to speak when I was in Guadalajara, but I could already understand a lot and being surrounded by Spanish all the time, I learned quite fast. People are very patient and willing to help so it is no problem if you are not fluent yet on arrival.

#### finances

I saved some money before my trip, received 'studiefinanciering' and 'OV-vergoeding' every month and the rent in Mexico was much lower than in Utrecht. All of this in combination with the much lower prices in Mexico made it possible to travel a lot and join other activities.

### study/placement abroad period

#### study programme/work plan (concerning content and organisational issues)

The first two weeks of the semester you can try all the courses you want and after that you make the final decision. So don't worry too much about the courses you choose before arrival, you can still change them later.

#### academic quality of education/placement activities

The academic level of the courses I took was lower than in Utrecht and the way of teaching was quite different (smaller groups, more interaction, more informal etc.). However, the fact that all classes, texts, presentations, exams and reports are in Spanish makes it more challenging of course (especially at the beginning). But don't worry, most teachers (at least the ones I had ;) ) understand if you don't speak and write Spanish perfectly and they appreciate the efforts you make. Moreover, the fact that I had less work to do for my classes than in Utrecht



made it possible to do other things beside my studies, of which I learnt a lot as well :)
counselling/support at host institution/organisation
I didn't need a lot of support at the university, but you could always go to the exchange coordinator's office and ask for help. The only thing is that communication can often be a bit slow and you might have to go back several times if you need something to be done for you.
transfer of credits
For this I also had to wait quite a long time since the transcript had to be sent by mail, which takes a few months to arrive in the Netherlands. Some of my grades were lowered a little bit in the end.
<b>student life</b>
welcome/orientation programme
We had one or two meetings in the beginning and there was a tutor program, but I didn't use it that much.
accommodation
I found my room through a Facebook page (there are many!) before I went there, which was very convenient. However, there are always many rooms available so you could also stay in a hostel the first days and start looking for a room once you're there. The rent should be around 100-150 euros a month.
leisure/culture
There is always a lot to do in and around Guadalajara, so you will always find something to do in the city itself. There are also many many other beautiful places in Mexico so you should absolutely travel a lot if you have the possibility and see as much as you can!
suggestions/tips
I would recommend going to dancing 'classes' in Chapultepec on Monday evenings. It is in the middle of a large avenue and everybody dances and will invite you to join as well. Another thing you shouldn't miss is the via recreativa on Sundays. They close a lot of roads for cars so people can walk, skate, bike etc. They were planning to include more roads so you can go really far!
<b>conclusions</b>
would you recommend this host organisation/destination to others? please explain
Absolutely! Despite the bad stories you may hear about Mexico (that made me doubt a few times before as well) it is a beautiful country and Guadalajara is a safe place to live. People are friendly, you can find Mexican food on almost every corner of the street, the weather in Guadalajara is perfect and you can easily visit other beautiful places from there. Moreover, it is very easy to get in touch with other Mexican students and many of them immediately invite you for everything, which I really liked!
do you have any additional advice or comments?
Enjoy!



## UU Study Abroad Report Form

faculty/college	University College Utrecht
level	X bachelor <input type="checkbox"/> master <input type="checkbox"/> PhD <input type="checkbox"/> other
name degree programme	Liberal Arts and Sciences (pre-Medicine track)
destination city & country	Guadalajara, México
name host institution and/or company/organization	Universidad de Gualadajara
purpose of exchange	X study/courses <input type="checkbox"/> work placement <input type="checkbox"/> field work <input type="checkbox"/> other
departure date (dd/mm/yyyy)	28 / 01 / 2014
return date (dd/mm/yyyy)	13 / 08 / 2014

### preparation

#### exchange/placement application process

The application process for the University of Guadalajara is not very complicated. Just follow the instruction on Osiris. You just need to make sure to get your transcript and language proficiency form in time.

#### academic preparation

For me this was not so much of an issue, because the courses I took on exchange did not have very specific requirements to get in. Nevertheless it is a good idea to check the prerequisites of the courses you'd like to take on the website.

#### language preparation

I already speak Spanish since I was raised bilingual. I just needed to go by the Spanish professor to get my language proficiency form signed. She just asked me some questions and we chatted for a bit in Spanish.

#### finances

My parents paid my tuition fee, so that helped a lot. You should be able to find decent housing for no more than 150 euros per month. Many people renting rooms know exchange students have more money to spare, so if you look for housing from abroad you'll probably end up paying more than if you start looking once you're there. (And don't worry, there are plenty of rooms available.) My income came from Sufi (basisbeurs) and OV-vergoeding, which for me was enough to get around. In addition I had saved up another 2000 EUR for traveling (including my plane ticket from the Netherlands to Mexico, which cost about 800 EUR) and I still had some left at the end of the semester. In general life in Mexico is not very expensive, but because everything is so cheap a lot of foreign exchange students are tempted to consume a lot. I think that from all the foreign exchange students I knew I spend the least money.

### study/placement abroad period

#### study programme/work plan (concerning content and organisational issues)

I did make a study plan for the semester before going on exchange, but once I got there it completely changed. It is a good idea to look on the UdG's website to see their course offerings and get some idea of what you would like to do, but the best people to advice you are the student's itself, and your tutor. In my experience there is a really big difference in the quality of the teachers, some are really good, some really lazy or unfair, so before you choose your subjects you should definitely ask around about what the teacher is like. (At least this is true for the faculty I was at, CUCS, I don't know if it applies to others.)



academic quality of education/placement activities
As commented below, the quality of the courses may depend on the teacher that teaches it. In general I would say that the quality is less than the courses I took at UCU. The format of the classes is very varied. In some classes you only sit and listen and in others participation is required; some classes have weekly exams some none at all.
counselling/support at host institution/organisation
As mentioned before, you are given a tutor who helps you choose your classes. For me it didn't go beyond that, but I suppose you could have a more useful relation with your tutor if you needed.
transfer of credits
I have not gotten to this yet, so I can not really comment on it.
<b>student life</b>
welcome/orientation programme
There is one general welcome meeting for all exchange students, which is more a formality than really informative.. For the rest the orientation is different per faculty. The faculty I was at (Health Sciences (CUCS)) coupled us all to a tutor who advised us about what subjects to take, which was very helpful. My housemate, who studied social science (at CUCSH) also had a buddy, to which whom she had had contact from before she got to Guadalajara.
accommodation
The exchange coordinator from the UdG will send you a list with housing options previous students have had good experiences with. You should be able to find decent housing for no more than 150 euros per month. Many people renting rooms know exchange students have more money to spare, so if you look for housing from abroad you'll probably end up paying more than if you start looking once you're there. (And don't worry, there are plenty of rooms available.) But it is of course saver to have a place to arrive as soon as you get there.
leisure/culture
There is A LOT to do in Guadalajara, for a budget price there are many film festivals, concerts, manifestations, museums etc. to visit, and get to know the culture from the inside. In addition me and a friend also joined a salsa dancing class, which was a great way to get to know some local people.
suggestions/tips
Tuesdays there is often a free concert in the Teatro Degollado, in the city centre. Even the visit to the theatre itself is worth it, even if you are not a fan of classical music. Museums are also free on Tuesdays (and in general you can often get discount with your Mexican student card) Mondays there are free salsa dancing classes in the open air, at Chapultepec.
<b>conclusions</b>
would you recommend this host organisation/destination to others? please explain
I would definitely recommend the UdG to other exchange students, especially those studying pre-medicine. Here you get a lot of opportunities for practical experiences you can not get at UCU. It is for example very easy to get an internship at the hospital or nurses station, where students are allowed to do a lot of things. Also, as they have an official faculty in health sciences there is a very broad variety of subjects that can be of interest for pre-med students. In addition Guadalajara is a great city with a lot of culture and many things to do, you will definitely fall in love with it.
do you have any additional advice or comments?
Mexico no longer gives student visas for people who are only staying for one semester, and their tourist visa is only good for 6 months. If you will be staying for more than 6 months you'll need a prove that you'll leave the country at least once in the first six months to renew your visa. The Mexican customs really doesn't make a point out of it, but the Dutch do. I didn't have any prove I would be leaving the country, because I planed to buy a buss



ticket once I was there, and they made me buy a (quite expensive) plane ticket right there at the airport before allowing me to pass through customs.

Also, biking culture is really growing in Guadalajara, and you can get around quite safely (but do use a helmet!) and often much faster than with public transport on a bike.

Contact details:

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