



2019-2020

Report 1

permission to publish contact details**	<i>optional; only if you allow students preparing for study abroad to contact you (directly)</i>
	my e-mail address <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: e.j.dejong4@students.uu.nl
faculty/college	Humanities
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	Liberal Arts and Sciences

destination city & country	Leuven, Belgium
how did you travel to your destination?	Train
name university abroad	KU Leuven
start date	23 / 09 / 2019 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	31 / / 01 / 2020 (dd/mm/yyyy)

PREPARATION	
exchange application process	The process was fairly easy. Of course some work was required to write an adequate motivation letter, but the 'how's and when's' were explained clearly and could easily be found online. Whenever I had any questions, the UU International Office was easy to contact and very helpful.
counselling & support at Utrecht University	Like I said, the UU International Office was very helpful with any questions I had. Whenever I had questions about details of the Erasmus grant, my question was forwarded and replied to quickly by the Erasmus-branch of the International Office.
academic preparation	I had to make sure I stayed on course with my studies at Utrecht, but because I already had the required amount of ECTS, there was not much academic preparation I had to do.
language preparation	Lucky for me the only languages I was taking courses in were English and Dutch, in which I'm both fluent.
finances	With help from the Erasmus grant and some help from my parents, combined with my own savings, I was able to finance my exchange. My housing expenses were almost completely covered by the grant.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD	
study programme (content and organisational issues)	



Most of the courses were easy to adapt to as an exchange student. However, I was also able to take Dutch courses that of course didn't have a lot of internationals in it, which meant it wasn't greatly adapted to exchange students and that sometimes causes some organisational issues. However, my contact at KU Leuven was always very helpful, as well as my Belgian peers.
academic quality of education activities
A great deal of my education activity took place within the Institute of Philosophy in Leuven, which is an internationally acknowledged institute of high quality. This was also the main reason I wanted to go on exchange to KU Leuven. Apart from this institute, I followed courses (in social sciences) lectured and coordinated by professors who themselves had written (part of) the course literature - which also increased the academic quality.
counselling & support at receiving university abroad
Like I said, my contact at the International Office of KU Leuven (Nadine Kerstens) was always very helpful. I could email her and she would sometimes even reply the same day, but I was also able to come by her office any time she was in.
transfer of credits
The transfer of credits was fairly easy - Osiris is very clear in what is required for the transfer of ECTS.

STUDENT LIFE	
welcome & orientation programme	Before every exchange semester there's a week full of activities for exchange students, which is very fun. Furthermore, every mandatory meeting was combined with an activity as well.
accommodation	Leuven is a city of great fun, especially for students. The night life is very much alive as well. Besides, Leuven has a lot of cultural history and has some great musea. There's no way you will get bored in this city.
leisure & culture	Like I said, there is something for everyone in this city and getting bored is impossible.
suggestions/tips	If you're visiting during the first semester I definitely recommend the '24 uurs loop' during the first month, and the Christmas market in December.

CONCLUSIONS	
would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain	I would definitely recommend this university, because of the education of high quality, as well as the city, because of its liveliness and cultural history. Even though it might be close to home (NL), you would be surprised of the cultural differences, which makes it a real exchange experienced.
do you have any additional advice or comments?	I do advise you when taking courses in Dutch to keep asking your peers about, for example, the course literature. Sometimes this is more obvious to them than it is to you (because you're foreign). I also advise getting your course literature at Acco, as well as any stationary if needed.

Report 2



faculty/college	Humanities
level	<input type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	RMA Comparative Literary Studies

destination city & country	Leuven, Belgium
how did you travel to your destination?	Train
name university abroad	KU Leuven
start date	16 / 09 / 2019 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	02 / 02 / 2020 (dd/mm/yyyy)

PREPARATION	
exchange application process	The application was a bit complicated for me because I wanted to do both an internship and take courses, but with the help of the international office I was able to find a solution.
counselling & support at Utrecht University	As I went on exchange before, I already knew about all procedures. I mostly used the support of my programme coordinator to prepare for all the specifics.
academic preparation	None, as the courses I would take fitted my programme in Utrecht
language preparation	None, my courses were either in Dutch or English
finances	All expenses are generally slightly lower than in the Netherlands. I had an Erasmus grant and kept my DUO loan and student OV (together with the Campuskaart I could travel between Belgium and the Netherlands for free).

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD	
study programme (content and organisational issues)	I took both courses and an internship. You can try out courses for 2 weeks, and then have to decide which you want to register for. All courses go on for about 10 weeks, which is not long at all. However, you will have to use your free time after wisely to study for the very intensive examination month. Also, no grades are made public until the end of the examination month, even if you took an exam months before.
academic quality of education activities	The academic quality is very high, although a bit more facts-based so you will really have to study hard for the final exams. For my specific research master's programme, I was able to take courses in Dutch with the advanced master's programme. This was nice because the level was very high and I was able to meet Belgian students and be integrated in their programme. If you don't speak Dutch, the offer of high level courses in this specific field is a bit lower, but in general there are a lot of interesting courses in English as well and they let you choose from all different faculties.



counselling & support at receiving university abroad
Everything was very clearly organized and we were always well informed via Toledo (their version of Blackboard).
transfer of credits
25

STUDENT LIFE
welcome & orientation programme
Very good, a full week and two weekends of activities to meet other students. Most activities are optional. They also provide a special lecture for Dutch students that are studying in Leuven.
accommodation
Finding accomodation if you are only in Leuven for one semester is quite difficult because most landlords use a 10, 11 or 12 month contract. It is recommended to go on Facebook groups to find Belgian students who want to sublet their room. If that's not possible, wait until the beginning of the semester (half September) because usually landlords who do not have filled up all their 'koten' yet are willing to make an exception and provide you with a semester contract. If none of this works out, you can always easily find a room for the entire year and try and find an international student that wants to sublet the room in the other semester.
leisure & culture
Leuven itself is quite small, but really student-oriented and there are a lot of student organizations. Especially Pangaea, which also organizes activities for international students and has a meeting place, is nice.
suggestions/tips
Get a Campuskaart, with which you can travel from Leuven to the Dutch border by train for practiacally no money at all.

CONCLUSIONS
would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain
Yes if you want a good academic experience in a very good university with good facilities, yes if you want the Erasmus experience (large international community with loads of parties), no if you want to discover a cool new city (Even though it's beautiful, I got bored of the city after a couple of weeks, and I already knew all the other Belgian cities).
do you have any additional advice or comments?

2018-2019

Report 1

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



destination city & country	Leuven, Belgium
name university abroad	KU Leuven
start date	24 / 09 / 2018 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	22 / 01 / 2019 (dd/mm/yyyy)

PREPARATION

exchange application process

The application process was very clear and easy. I made use of the places that were still free after the first round, and the overview with free places of the UU was very useful.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

The people in Utrecht really helped me during my application process. They were also very nice because my master officially belongs to the faculty of science, but is in practice related to more fields of study. I am happy that they allowed me to have an exchange with the faculty of arts in Leuven.

academic preparation

In order to have an exchange with the faculty of arts in Leuven, it was good that I already took courses that related to the field of arts to show that I was capable of following courses there. And I had an extensive look at the courses they offered before applying for my exchange.

language preparation

The courses at KU Leuven were in Dutch and English. Dutch is my native language. My master programme in the Netherlands was entirely in English, so I didn't feel the need to prepare myself for those languages. However, as I chose to live in Brussels, I did study French a few months in advance.

finances

I applied for the Erasmus+ grant, and the rent in Brussels was sufficiently lower than it was in Amsterdam, therefore the grant gave me the opportunity to live and study in Belgium without the need to work there. Which would have made it a bit more difficult, because I would apply for a new health insurance in Belgium.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)

I applied for the faculty of arts. The programme was online half a year before, so I could already see what courses they offered. As a student you can follow courses for 2 weeks and decide which courses you are going to take after this 2 weeks. This was new for me and not completely clear in advance.

academic quality of education activities

The method of education is very different in Belgium than it is in the Netherlands. The focus is more upon learning by heart and less upon being creative in your thought. I found this a bit difficult, because I am more used to the Dutch education system. Another difference was the examination by oral exam which I was not used to and I found it hard to know how to prepare myself for it.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

The first introductory week was very well structured and informative. Most things were very clear to me. I would have liked to have a bit more advice on strategies to handle the different educational method, for example how to prepare for an oral exam.

transfer of credits

The idea I have of the Belgium system is that it is harder to get the kind of grades I am used to get in the Netherlands.



STUDENT LIFE
welcome & orientation programme
It was very welcoming and informative. I found a photography workshop that I really liked through their info market of student organisations.
accommodation
I found my own accomodation, because I really wanted to live in Brussels
leisure & culture
There is defintely a big cultural difference between Belgium and the Netherlands. In class I was way more direct and verbal than the flamish students. I tried to blend in and say less, but sometimes no one would answer the question of the teacher and I often had an inner conflict in trying to adjust to the 'silent culture' or to answer a question because I like to have a bit of discussion in class.
suggestions/tips
I was 29 years at the time of my exchange. In Belgium a lot of student discounts work with age. Often you have to be below 25 years and a student to get a discount. Therefore, I could almost never make use of the student discounts. I was not used to this in the Netherlands and it made my financial situation in Belgium more difficult. Maybe it is good to tell people who are interested to go to Belgium as an exchange student and who are older than 24 years that they cannot make use of a lot of student discounts.
CONCLUSIONS
would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain
Yes, I would. Leuven is a lovely city and everything is well arranged. Especially the philosophy department, were I followed some courses as well, is very established and offers interesting topics.
do you have any additional advice or comments?
No, I don't.



Report 2

faculty/college	Humanities		
level	bachelor's	master's	PhD
name study programme	Nederlandse literatuur en cultuur (RMA)		
destination city & country	Leuven, België		
name university abroad	KU Leuven		
start date	17/09/2018	(dd/mm/yyyy)	
end date	02/02/2019	(dd/mm/yyyy)	

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

PREPARATION	
exchange application process	My application was mainly curriculum-driven rather than location-driven. It was, in my case, quite hard to find study programs that suited my educational needs. Eventually used a quite nice website that showed all university courses in Europe on topic X, but expect to be confused by this variety of university websites.
counselling & support at Utrecht University	Excellent: walk-in hours, fast replies on e-mails, etc.
academic preparation	Choose courses on master's level I already had some background in.
language preparation	None — Belgium is not that different language wise
finances	Financial situation was quite similar as in The Netherlands; did not need to save a whole lot of money. Erasmus grant is a nice extra, but don't expect to live on it. (Also managed to get a work from home-job during my Erasmus)
STUDY ABROAD PERIOD	
study programme (content and organisational issues)	



<p>I followed mainly courses from one master's at KU Leuven, but still it was a bit of a hassle to fit the (timeslots of) the different courses together. Because they have a semester system, you follow five or six courses at the same time, and with one or two lectures in the week, and approximately nine exams in January, things tend to overlap rather quickly.</p>
<p>academic quality of education activities</p>
<p>Academic quality is similar to Utrecht. Mainly lectures, limited to zero working groups — which I thought sometimes limited the depth of some courses (although this can also be attributed to the fact you have six courses a time) .</p>
<p>counselling & support at receiving university abroad</p>
<p>Great, but only needed it to finalize my study programme.</p>
<p>transfer of credits</p>
<p>Not completely transferred yet, but the ECTS system is the same.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">STUDENT LIFE</p>
<p>welcome & orientation programme</p>
<p>The complete first week was reserved for orientation programme. It was a great way to meet other international students.</p>
<p>accommodation</p>
<p>Housing market in Leuven is way better than in Utrecht — there were two days in between first finding a house online and signing the contract.</p>
<p>leisure & culture</p>
<p>Leuven is an amazing city, somewhat small but very vibrant.</p>
<p>suggestions/tips</p>
<p>Bring a bike. You don't need other transport.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">CONCLUSIONS</p>
<p>would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain</p>
<p>Yes. For most Dutch students, going to Belgium on exchange might not be the adventurous Erasmus they imagine, which I think I still have to (to some extent) agree on, but you will still meet a lot of international students, so the experience is, in the end, different than just studying in another (Dutch/Belgium) city (although this is also up to you, of course). And Leuven is really nice.</p>
<p>do you have any additional advice or comments?</p>
<p> </p>



2017-2018

faculty/college	Department of Philosophy and Religion Studies
level	<u>master's</u>
name study programme	Research Master Philosophy
Destination City and Country	Leuven, Belgium
Level	<input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Master <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
start date	18/ 09 /2017
end date	03/ 02 /2018

PREPARATION
exchange application process
This was quite some work, considering that the UU website didn't clearly state that in Leuven philosophy is not part of the humanities department as it is in the Netherlands. So at first I couldn't go to the KU Leuven. Fortunately, they made an exception for me in the end.
counselling & support at Utrecht University
UU was quite quick to respond to my emails and therefore helpful. Still, there were a lot of things I had to discover for myself, such as which documents I needed to send to my receiving university. Also, submitting the forms in Osiris almost never went perfect the first attempt. Make sure to check that you filled in everything they want you to.
academic preparation
There was none really necessary. I only researched a little bit the courses and teachers in Leuven.
language preparation
Not necessary because I speak Dutch and English perfectly.
finances
Living costs in Leuven, and Belgium in general, are higher than in the Netherlands. I would really recommend saving some more money for this. It took me by surprise how expensive the supermarkets are. Housing on the other hand can be cheaper.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD
study programme (content and organisational issues)
The content of my study programme really suited my personal interests and what I missed, so to speak, in Utrecht. The organization was fine. The only thing was that I had to change some courses because the schedule came out rather late.
academic quality of education activities
The level of teaching was similar to Utrecht, if not higher. The intensity of especially the Husserl course I followed was of exceptional standards
counselling & support at receiving university abroad
My contact person in Leuven was very helpful and I had no problems at all whatsoever
transfer of credits
Credits are very similar to Utrecht, grades not though so keep that in mind

STUDENT LIFE
welcome & orientation programme
Since I arrived quite some weeks before the official orientation days I felt a bit lost at first, but this week was very nice to get to



know people. Especially the faculty nights
accommodation
I arranged my own accomodotion, which turned out to be quite cheap. I would recommend finding something through Facebook, not through student housing because the expenses are insane
leisure & culture
There are several things to do in Leuven but in the weekends everybody goes to their parents so the city is empty then. Shops, restaurants and such are all closed on Sunday and the evenings. Also, the amount of activities is limited so I would recommend going to Brussels, Antwerp and other cities closeby to explore.
suggestions/tips
Make sure to make friends (either Belgium or international) at the beginning of your stay because groups tend to stick together and it might be harder to find a group once they have been made.

CONCLUSIONS
would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain
I would recommend KU Leuven because the level of education is great and the buildings are beautiful. The only thing I didn't like were the closing times of the libraries and shops. Especially in the weekends, when all the libraries are closed, I couldn't find a proper place to work.
do you have any additional advice or comments?
Prepare to seperate your garbage extensively, fantastic for the environment

2016 – 2017

Report 1

faculty/college	Humanities
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	Liberal Arts and Sciences

destination city & country	Leuven, Belgium
name university abroad	KU Leuven
start date	10 / 02 / 2017 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	27 / 06 / 2017 (dd/mm/yyyy)

PREPARATION
exchange application process
The application process demanded more time than I thought. It consists in gathering a lot of information by doing online research and making a plan. However, if you put enough effort and time in it, you will find everything you need and you will be able to apply somewhere without many problems.
counselling & support at Utrecht University



The support from UU was really good. Every email was answered soon enough and the info-sessions did provide the necessary information. My experience is that there was also a lot of non-relevant information at the sessions, but anyways it helps to get yourself in the mood to go for an exchange.
academic preparation
I didn't really experience something like an academic preparation. I was happy to engage in a theology programme, while in Utrecht I am only able to do courses in Religious Studies. This expectation turned out right and I'm feeling academically better educated than before, actually.
language preparation
My exchange took place in Leuven, Belgium. This meant I could just follow the Dutch programme and I didn't had anything to do with language tests and preparation.
finances
The finances weren't a big deal. I made a plan, based on the expectations of costs I would make. Living in Leuven is a little more expensive, but the Erasmus scholarship made up for that.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD	
study programme (content and organisational issues)	I followed courses in Theology, at the faculty of Theology and Religious Studies. My courses can be integrated partly in my major, and partly in the free space.
academic quality of education activities	The quality was really good, and because I was very much interested in the content of the courses, I have learnt more in an academic sens than I have in Utrecht. There were a lot of good professors and facilities, so the studying atmosphere was very good at the KU Leuven.
counselling & support at receiving university abroad	The counseling was good enough. There was a small meeting in favour of theology students that arrived in the second semester, but this was the first time they did this. This is simply because the most students arrive at the beginning of the academic year. The instructions from the start of my stay here were clear, and the welcome was nice. I knew what I had to do and how things went in Leuven, there was also a cultural introduction to the Belgian culture and society. Furthermore, in signing the needed papers there were no problems at all, and the professor responsible for the Erasmus students was very willing to help. Also, every email was directly answered.
transfer of credits	The transfer of credits is still to take place, because I will have the results of my tests later.

STUDENT LIFE	
welcome & orientation programme	I didn't participate in the orientation days, but what I heard about it was very positive. Unfortunately I couldn't come earlier, so I missed this introductory part and that made the begin here definitely harder. The week before the semester started, there were a lot of activities and possibilities to get to know fellow students. There was also the possibility of signing up for a buddy's programme.
accommodation	It was easy to find housing, because the KU offers a lot of rooms. They own a lot of student residences in Leuven and you can apply for them, in which case you'll have a good chance of getting a room. The



<p>accomodation was nice, because I lived in an old seminary with a beautiful garden and a big living room. A lot of the residences have a living room, garden, and often a ping-pong table and a music room as well.</p>
<p>leisure & culture</p>
<p>Belgian culture is, of course, not that different from Dutch culture. Still it was a very nice thing to live in a different city. Leuven is beautiful and has a lot of old buildings. There are a lot of students as well, and the number of bars corresponds to this fact. Half a year is not enough to try all of them! Furthermore, the atmosphere was great, because the city isn't that big and it has a very relaxed vibe. I could walk everywhere I needed to be, and that is something I will miss definitely. Not too far away are some great cities like Brugge and Gent, and if you want to get back to Holland for a weekend, that's also perfectly possible.</p>
<p>suggestions/tips</p>
<p>My tip would be to fully engage in the orientation days, and to go out there and meet a lot of people. This will make your stay start in a better way. On the other side, don't feel obligated to participate in everything. The international student scene is one of a lot of short contacts and fun, but you can also find your own way in the process.</p>

<p>CONCLUSIONS</p>
<p>would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain</p>
<p>I would, because the city of Leuven is very nice to have lived in, the KU offers a lot of facilities and there are a lot of international studens here. Moreover, Leuven has a lot to offer in cultural activities. From live music to museums and performances.</p>
<p>do you have any additional advice or comments?</p>
<p>-</p>