



ERASMUS+ STUDIES UU Report 2015-2016

family name	
first name	
student number	
e-mail address	
faculty/college	Geosciences
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	Earth Sciences

destination city & country	Leeds, England
name university abroad	Leeds University
start date	16 / 09 / 2015 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	24 / 01 / 2016 (dd/mm/yyyy)

PREPARATION	
exchange application process	
	It took quite some work and time, I was confused at first about all the forms that have to sorted, but help was there through the whole process. So everything turned out fine.
counselling & support at Utrecht University	
	The people you need are easy to get in touch with and are willing to help you. However, sometimes it was not entirely clear what is expected from you. Like what exactly they want you to write in certain forms, or in some cases the University could have made things more easy for us. But when you let them know you need some more guidance, they'll give you that.
academic preparation	
	The academic preparation was not really necessary for me, since I followed the courses within my study programme. Therefore my general knowledge on these topics were sufficient to start with.
language preparation	
	I went to an university in England, so I didn't really need any language preparation.
finances	



You always spend more money than you expect. So I had to loan some money from the bank, which of course I was already aware of that I needed to do that, but luckily I also had some savings to help me out. And especially the Erasmus grant was really a big help.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)

I had some problems with the modules that I had chosen, because apparently they changed the period of teaching from semester one to two, so I had to choose other ones. But that was arranged pretty quickly, so I didn't turn out to be a big problem. The content of the modules were very well structured, including field trips and interesting lectures. I don't regret any of the modules I have taken.

academic quality of education activities

I considered the academic quality really good. Most teachers are really enthusiastic about their field. The only problem that I experienced was reaching them after the lectures. Because afterwards we only have 10 minutes to go to another lecture that can be on the other side of the campus. So separate meetings were needed or e-mailing the teacher if you would have a question or needed extra help. They are however always able to do that for you, which was really nice! And educational activities like fieldtrips, tutorials and exercises were set up, which I learned a lot from and it was fun!

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

Support was always easy reachable. You did get a tutor, but as a study abroad student you don't really need one. I only had one appointment at the beginning of the year, but that's it. If you would face any problems, of any kind, there is a place where you can go to, and they are able to help you out with everything you need.

transfer of credits

The grades were known quite quickly, so that is sorted pretty soon and easily.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

I liked the welcome and orientation programme very much! The university organized a Fresher's week, with many different societies that you could join; like sports, politics, religious, anything really. And they show you around campus, set up events to meet other people and many more activities. They also performed a culture shock drama, to let us know what real British culture is like as a comedy sketch, it was really funny. So yes, the whole campus life there is very vibrant. There is always something going on.

accommodation

The accommodation was pleasant. I stayed at Montague Burton residences. The rooms were clean, warm and the kitchen was large and nice. The only thing is, that it is quite expensive, but actually all the accommodations on campus are anyway. It's worth it though, since it's a big plus is to live so close to uni (5 minutes walking), and also to the city center (around 15 min walking), which is really convenient.

They arrange that for every study abroad student, you only have to fill out a form and choose your preference and they will try to sort that out for you. They pretty much guarantee you a place.

leisure & culture

I had enough free time. Almost every weekend I was able to spend with the society that I joined, or on travelling and just hanging out with friends. There are also enough events organized and day trips that you can join! The British culture doesn't differ that much from the Netherlands, but there are still some things that you'll have to get used to. But for me, it was quite easy to adapt to it.



suggestions/tips

CONCLUSIONS

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

Yes absolutely! I had an amazing time, and met so many people from all over the world. The organization is really good and also the quality of teaching. There is always something going on, and you get the full campus experience. The city is also really nice, just like the local people! I would definitely recommend it!

do you have any additional advice or comments?

Well, just in general I would advice you to just go to events that seem interesting to you. Try new stuff, talk to people, and just get out of your comfort zone. You'll gain a lot from it!



ERASMUS+ STUDIES

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family name	
first name	
student number	
e-mail address	
faculty/college	Faculty of Geosciences
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	Human Geography and Planning

destination city & country	Leeds, United Kingdom
name university abroad	University of Leeds
start date	17 / 09 / 2014 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	17 / 01 / 2015 (dd/mm/yyyy)

PREPARATION

exchange application process

Leeds was actually only my fifth choice initially. I hesitated very long before I applied for an Erasmus+ exchange, and I also found it hard to choose because I wanted to go to a university in Europe and it seemed that due to language restrictions the choice became quite limited. When I finally did apply, I put three other universities in my top three (located in Ireland, Turkey and Finland). These universities all had links with the Utrecht University, not specifically with my faculty. However, I discovered that the chances of selection are much smaller in that case, because the number of applications for these universities is way bigger than for universities that are linked to your faculty. I don't know the exact reason, but I think that my late application is part of the reason that I did not get in any of these three universities! That was a real bummer. But there was still hope, because there was a list of universities available who had still places left for students from Utrecht University. I decided to apply for a university in Taiwan, but again, I hesitated too long and the place was given away again. Nevertheless, I discovered that there was still a fair amount of places left in the programme of the faculty. A lot of them were located in the United Kingdom. I like the United Kingdom, because I visited already a few times, and the student life seemed amazing to me. I choose the University of Leeds because the research and education at the faculty of Geography and the faculty of Earth and Environment are of high quality. Moreover, Leeds is located central in Northern England and therefore a good place to discover the United Kingdom from.



counselling & support at Utrecht University
I am very satisfied with the support and counselling I got from Utrecht University. My emails were answered quite quick and clear.
academic preparation
I did not really do any academic preparation for studying in the United Kingdom.
language preparation
My father has a friend living in England, and I stayed 10 days with his family before I went to Leeds to get used to speaking English because I was insecure about that. However, in the end I don't think it was necessary for me, though I had a nice time there.
finances
The Erasmus+ grant in combination with the student grant from and the compensation for travelling from the Dutch government was sufficient to live in the United Kingdom. However, the rent of my room was very high compared to Dutch rents, so my parents initially paid my rent. I am now paying it back to them in small amounts whenever I am able to. If this would not have been possible, my life in the UK would have been much harder financially.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD
study programme (content and organisational issues)
Though all modules at the University of Leeds are in English of course, not all modules are available for foreign students. The choice gets even more limited when you study at the university for only one semester, because a lot of modules are year-round. Though I did a few modules who have a shorter version for exchange students, while the British students in your classes are taking the longer version of the module. I initially also had a few modules that had lecture times that overlapped each other. Therefore I had to switch modules there. However, this was quite easily and quickly arranged with a few emails, though there is a deadline for this that you have to take notice of. It was even possible to switch modules after the first week, when you for example discover after the first lectures that the module you choose is not what you expected from it.
academic quality of education activities
I think the quality of education in Leeds was high. There were some differences with the Utrecht University. First, I had six modules in one semester and since the semester was not divided into two periods, like Utrecht, I had them all at the same time. This demanded some more organisation than I was used to in Utrecht, since I only had two or one module(s) at the same time in Utrecht. The other difference was the amount of individual assignments at the University of Leeds. Compared to Utrecht University, I had to write a lot of individual essays and did not have to do much group work. Personally, I prefer individual essays over group work so I was rather satisfied. Compared to Utrecht, I also did not have much exams (though this depends on your programme. I know people who studied business had exams of every module), but instead I had to write essays for five modules. However, the length of the essays and the amount of essays with the deadlines all close to each other caused a very high workload. On the other hand, I feel like I learned more in one semester at the University of Leeds than in a year at Utrecht University and I still had time for fun things with a good planning. So this is a point of consideration if you are thinking of going on exchange to Leeds.
counselling & support at receiving university abroad
If you want to go for security and service, choose the University of Leeds. I was amazed by the amount of organisations from the University that can help you with every possible problem. In the first days of my stay in Leeds, international students got a presentation of about four hours where this was all explained.
transfer of credits



At the moment of writing this (beginning of February), I am still waiting on the grade list of the University of Leeds. However, this will be a 'provisional' grade list, since the University of Leeds only gives the official grades in June/July after a second opinion. I was not aware of this before I started my semester in Leeds in September. I actually expected to graduate from my bachelor at Utrecht University after this semester, because I studied for my last credits in Leeds. However, now I have to wait until the summer to officially graduate. This is not a major problem for me, because my master only starts in September, but it might be for others in the organisation of their studies.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

Leeds University Student Union won a prize for best Student Union, and though I don't have much comparison, I can understand why. Especially the first weeks of the semester are amazing, and then especially the first semester, because then there is a Freshers' Week for the new students at University Union. There are many parties in the Union and the Union organises in cooperation with all the societies (which are more than 250!) a 'Give it a Go'-programme. This means that all the societies organise a few free try-out days where every student can join so they can see if they like the society so this makes the decision to join a society easier. But you can also just go to the Give-it-a-go session for fun and not join the society. You can for example play in a quidditch game of the Harry Potter Society or bake cakes with the Baking Society. Everything is possible! You will receive a few guides and a calendar with all the activities of the first semester.

accommodation

As an exchange student in Leeds, you are secured of University accommodation if you sign up for it. However, you can also choose to live in private accommodation, though I know that some students had problems finding accommodation in the private sector. So if you want security, you choose university accommodation. The downside of University accommodation is that it is quite expensive, especially compared to rents in the Netherlands. Also you may get to live with people who are already working because it is common for students in Leeds (and the UK?) to live together with friends after the first year in University, so not all of them want to hire to exchange students. So most exchange students choose to live in University accommodation because you are secure of accommodation for the semester and you will live with other exchange students which is very nice. I lived with eight other students from all over the world and we became good friends. However, if you consider studying in Leeds for the whole year, you may consider private accommodation because then it can get quite expensive.

leisure & culture

The Student Union has its own building on campus where which contains for instance a small supermarket, a salad bar, a gift shop, a hairdresser, other lunch opportunities, a bar, a tea room and much more. In the basement are three (!) clubs located with all a different musical style. Every Friday is club evening in the Union, which is called 'Fruity'. It is very popular and very nice. There are also evenings with live music in the 'Hidden Café' and the 'Old Bar'. There are also many clubs and bars in the city centre of Leeds. Especially in the first weeks you will stumble over all the flyers in your hall (if you live in university halls) of clubs and parties and you have to dodge a lot of proppers. Leeds also has a lot of music venues where you can see known and unknown artists and bands. Leeds is also a really good shopping city, with a new and huge shopping centre called 'Trinity Centre'. I recommend the food court there, which is called 'Trinity Kitchen'.

And of course you can join a society! As I mentioned before, there are over 250 student societies connected to Leeds University Union. There will be one for you as well. There are for example societies for all kind of dance styles, societies for a lot of different kind of sports, food societies, religious societies, outdoor societies and so on. I joined the Hiking Society, that organises hiking trips to the most beautiful places in the United Kingdom, so it is a good way to discover the countryside of the UK.



To visit cities in the United Kingdom, you can join trips of the Student Union and the 'global community' society. I went on a few trips with them. But of course you can also organise your own trips. A good thing about Leeds is that it is located central in the North of England and therefore it is easy to go to other places in the UK from Leeds. But Yorkshire itself (the region where Leeds is located) is gorgeous as well. I visited the Yorkshire Dales with the Hiking Society and it is stunning! Yorkshire is very hilly and green and has also lots of places to visit if you are not a professional hiker and several picturesque cities, like York.

suggestions/tips

the Global Community society organises Global Cafes on Monday evenings where you can drink tea or coffee and meet other exchange students. This is a really good way to make friends in your first weeks because a lot of exchange students visit this evening. Even if you don't know anyone yet, don't be afraid to go there on your own because you will leave with a lot of new friends. Exchange students are very welcoming and it is very easy to start a chat with someone, because everyone is interested in other students. It is the place where I met most of my friends in Leeds.

CONCLUSIONS

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

I would definitely recommend Leeds and the University of Leeds if you would like to have an amazing student life in England. It is very well organised and you there are so many fun things to do! Moreover, Leeds it is located in the best part of England (in my opinion) and it is also a good city to travel to other places in the UK from. I am also very content with the education I received at the University of Leeds, but you have to keep in mind that the workload (at least for my programme) is rather high compared to Utrecht University. However, I managed do fun things during my semester and still pass my modules so I think this was only a useful experience.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

I hesitated (too) long before I decided to apply for an Erasmus+ exchange. If I knew be like this I would not have hesitated this long, because it is awesome! Don't be afraid to be alone because international students are very tolerant and friendly and you will definitely find people you like.



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level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	Earth Sciences

destination city & country	Leeds, England
name university abroad	Leeds University
start date	17 / 09 / 2014 (dd/mm/yyyy)
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PREPARATION

exchange application process

When I decided to go on exchange, the first thing was of course to find the university I wanted to go to. This was on itself a whole process of finding first of all the universities that give the modules I was interested in follow and gave these courses in English. Fortunately a map of available universities with the corresponding important information about these universities was available on the website of geosciences and was very helpful in making my decision. After making my decision to go to the University of Leeds, I had to write my motivation letter, plan of finances and study plan. This took some time, as you really have to think about why you want to go on exchange, and what you are exactly planning to do. I think it is good that they request that from you, as you really have to think about your exchange instead of having this vague plan of going.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

I was not so satisfied about the support of the Utrecht University, as I actually only got little information about all the things I had to arrange before going. And so I had to find out from hearing from other people about the important things which had to be arranged. For example, I only found out at the beginning of July that I had to apply for the Erasmus Scholarship myself, while I thought this was arranged for my. I would have liked some more clarity about this, which can easily be done by for example sending the students a checklist of things



which have to be done before going. The international office however was really helpful when I came with questions.
academic preparation
The courses I had chosen to follow in Leeds were all in the area of Environmental Sciences, rather than Geology, which is my major. These courses did not recommend any pre-requests, so I didn't need any specific academic preparation.
language preparation
My level of English, especially academic English was already on a sufficient level as most of my program of study is taught in English and thus I was already used to following courses in English and writing academically in English.
finances
It was good to think about my finances before leaving, as an exchange of course costs a lot of money. It was also good to look at the prices in England, which are overall higher than in The Netherlands. I looked at the average costs for rent and living and how much I was planning to spend on trips and compared this with the money I had available. Fortunately the Erasmus grant and the public transport compensation already helped a lot and besides that I worked most of the summer and had a savings account which I was willing to use for this experience. Overall I had a good approximation of my costs before I went, which was very useful.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)
The courses I had chosen in Leeds were all 10 credit courses, which is equal to 5 ECTS courses in The Netherlands. The difference is however is that in England, an academic year is separated into 2 semesters, instead of 4 periods. In this way I was following 6 courses at the same time for my whole semester abroad instead of 2 at the time. This reminded me of my highschool system, especially as all the courses I followed only consisted out of two times an one hour lecture, which is to my opinion too short to really get into a subject. And you are changing courses all the time, which is confusing if you are not used to this. The courses I followed were not too complicated in content and thus easy to follow and study. I did however really learn a lot and really extend my knowledge as I followed my courses mostly outside my own path of study.
academic quality of education activities
The academic quality of the lectures were fine, although i would've liked some more depth into the subject in some courses. This had to do with the fact that I already finished my bachelor and I followed first, second and one third year course in Leeds. I wanted to do some more thirdyear courses, but this wasn't possible either due to prerequisites I did not have or simply because of timeschedule clashes. Also the fact that I had only a few practical classes made me feel sometimes that I did not do anything for a whole week as I was only listening to lectures, which were only one hour, as I mentioned before. If I now look back however I can say that I actually learned a lot, it was just more spread out of the semester and the hard work only came in the end when I had 6 exams in two weeks.
counselling & support at receiving university abroad
The counselling and support at the University of Leeds was fine. I was appointed a mentor, with whom I had an introduction talk and could meet up again with if I felt the need to. Also the international office was really helpful and always responded quickly if I had any questions. The lecturers themselves were also reachable by email and I always got a response, which I really appreciated.
transfer of credits
For my assignments during the course, I got my grades back before the exams, which I really appreciated. Also I got the feedback with it, so you can actually see what you did wrong and learn from it. I however do not have



any grades back from my exams, which I now finished over a month ago. Therefore I do not know how these grades will be transferred to the Dutch system as in England does not work with the same grading system as in The Netherlands; they give grades from 0-100, with 40 as being a sufficient.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

The welcome and orientation program was really big and taken care of. At the beginning of the semester there was an international welcome week, the week before freshers week. This meant that there were only international students, and so you really got the chance to meet other international students. In this week there were welcome talks and other practical meetings, but they also organised a lot of activities to get to know the university, the city, the societies and each other. This was a really helpful and exciting first week.

accommodation

I could arrange an university accommodation before I got there, which was really good organized. On the site of the university there was a whole section about their accommodations which showed all the different accommodations available with all the information about the rent, the facilities and location included. It also contained pictures of the accommodation. This way you could really get a good image of the different accommodations available. When you made your choice you could fill in a form with your preference. As however it is not always possible to get in your preferred accommodation, you also had to fill in a list of preferences which you would like for your accommodation so that if you could not get into your preferred accommodation, you would get into another which does meet your preferences. I unfortunately did not get into my preferred accommodation, but was also satisfied with the accommodation I ended up at. It was a proper room and everything was in order. Also you could order a kitchen pack and a bedding pack before you arrived, so that you did not have to buy this yourself. I bought these packs and it was really nice to arrive in my room and not to have to think about kitchen supplies and beddings. Furthermore my accommodation also had a reception where you could always go to if you had a question or a complaint about the accommodation, for example when something is broken. They would quickly arrange someone to fix it, which I really appreciated. Also there was a printer there, so you did not had to go all the way to the university to print. The only negative thing about my accommodation was the laundry service. The laundry was next to the reception, so you had to go outside to do your laundry, which is already quite annoying. But the worse was that every wash costs 2.70 pounds and as you had no room to dry your clothes, you also had to use the dryer, which was another 1.30. In total you thus had to spend 4 pounds (5.20 euro) for one wash. On top of this, I had a broken machine a couple of times, and thus I had to spend even more money to wash my clothes. Furthermore I missed a living room, or some kind of common room, but this differed per accommodation. But overall I was really satisfied with my accommodation.

leisure & culture

Leeds has a lot to offer leisure and culture wise. The University of Leeds has a big society called the Union, which has a big building at the campus. The Union has a lot of societies, which you are all free to join. At the beginning of the semester all these societies presented themselves at a market where you could just walk around and register for any societies you were interested to join. Next to this market they also had 'Give It A Go' sessions, which were sessions from different societies which you were just free to join. In this way you could visit any society you were interested in joining, before deciding to join the society or not. It was also an opportunity to just visit a society for once, without having to join. I joined a couple of Give It A Go's and finally decided to join the Climbing Society and the Ballroom and Latin Society. The ballroom society had a learning session every Tuesday, which I joined together with a friend of mine. The climbing society organised trips to climb outside, but also went to the climbing wall several times every weeks, which you were free to join. I am really happy I joined these societies, because it was an opportunity to do something different than back home and as the societies are so open, they are really easy to join if you are only there for one semester.



Furthermore in Leeds itself there were multiple events throughout the semester like Light night and Bonfire night. Also the city has lots of bars, cafes and clubs next to a city centre with heaps of shops. Overall Leeds is just a very lively city with lots going on, which is really nice.

suggestions/tips

I would really recommend to join a society, because this is just a way to try some different things, and to meet English students! And if not, at least join some Give It A Go's, because they are just lots of fun.

CONCLUSIONS

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

I would definitely recommend Leeds and the University of Leeds to anyone. The city itself is very alive as I said before, and with all the societies and events, you will not get bored quickly. And the atmosphere is just great and you will really have the best time. The university itself is a proper university, although I would recommend not to only follow 10 credit courses, because 6 courses at the same time were a bit too much for me.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

Just enjoy! And don't worry in advance about any practical issues because Leeds is very well organised and it will all work out.