



## UU Study Abroad Report Form

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

destination city & country	Guadalajara, Mexico
name university abroad	Universidad de Guadalajara
start date	16/ 01 / 2023
end date	26 / 05 / 2023

### PREPARATION

#### exchange application process

The preparation of course starts with finding out which place you want to go to. For me this took a long time. Because I liked a lot of places. Important is to start early with reading in to the different universities. Some have higher restrictions to get in than others. But in the end it also important to think about what kind of culture you want to dive in to for half a year. I found this the hardest part. When you finally made your decision, you can arrange the documents that are necessary for it. But because you already made your choice where you want to go, it is also easy to explain why. Follow the path on the university website and you will be fine.

#### counselling & support at Utrecht University

I had some big questions for making the choice of the destination, for instance about the language. The university could help me through all my doubts.

#### academic preparation

The semesters are overlapping, so I needed to arrange something with the professors so I could make an exam while being abroad. I already asked this before I went to Mexico, to be sure it was possible.

#### language preparation

I needed to have level B Spanish to get it. I did an online course that helped me with this. I also did one block at the university Spanish.

#### finances

I worked a lot before going. And I can really recommend bringing a lot of money. I had some friends that couldn't travel a lot during the semester because they didn't have the money for it. I worked for a year and every month I put some money aside for the exchange.

### STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

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

I studied for 1 semester. I followed bachelor courses. Marketing, logistics and communication. The path international business. My Spanish wasn't that good, so I followed English courses. They don't offer a lot of them, only some international business courses.

#### academic quality of education activities

The quality was really low of my courses. Sometimes we learned things I already had in high school. I heard masters are more difficult and a better level, but all the bachelor people had an easy semester.



counselling & support at receiving university abroad
I you need help it can sometimes be hard. Mailing is not really a thing in Mexico and often you don't get a reply. I had a lot help from my buddy with certain thing to figure it out.
transfer of credits
For me this went wrong. I had to contact the university my self because not all my courses were graded.

STUDENT LIFE
welcome & orientation programme
This was really nice. To already meet some people and to understand what is expected from you during the semester. I had choses for the buddy program and that was the best decision I made. I became really good friends with her and she could help me with some questions in the beginning.
accommodation
There is a lot of offers in accommodation in Guadalajara. Some people go there and stay in an Airbnb or hostel the first view days and look there for a room. But I found it nicer and more relaxing if I already arranged in before. I was lucky and new someone from the semester before that gave me recommendations. But there are some facebook groups you can use or students organisations that also really help.
leisure & culture
You are never bored. The city is full of things to do. The people live more on the streets, so already walking around and exploring were a lot of my days activities.
suggestions/tips
Do the buddy program. This already connects you with people from Mexico. Because of my buddy, I came to different places and met other Mexicans easier.

CONCLUSIONS
would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain
I would highly recommend Guadalajara as an exchange destination. You will never be bored there and really learn a lot about a completely different culture. The level of the bachelors at UDG are not that high, so for a challenge in the courses I wouldn't expect to much. But you will learn a lot the whole semester, also outside of the university.



## UU Study Abroad Report Form

faculty/college	Geosciences
level	<input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor's
name study programme	Human Geography and Spatial Planning

destination city & country	, Guadalajara, Mexico
name university abroad	Universidad de Guadalajara
start date	1/01/2022
end date	01/06/2022

### PREPARATION

#### exchange application process

You have to do a lot of research yourself about the whole application process as guidance is limited. There is one checklist that did help me a lot (you can find it on the exchange tab at the UU website)

#### counselling & support at Utrecht University

To be honest, I am quite critical of the counselling & support of the UU in terms of the exchange process. I have to note that I waited 1,5 years to go on exchange because of covid so my conditions were not optimal, but still some things happened that were very unfortunate. Before Covid I had a pre-departure meeting which was helpful though, so I recommend going there. In this meeting there are usually students who have been to your destination so you can ask a lot. I also then received some documents like a checklist but also things like vaccinations you have to take. However, I got this checklist from my faculty so other fellow students of mine had none, which caused confusion. Some important things may not be clear on websites, and I personally sometimes had trouble getting the answers through emails. But, like I mentioned, my exchange timing was kind of weird. My tip is to FIRST do all your research online and if you have questions, just keep emailing departments. If you have questions concerning the UdG like when uni starts you can also just try to contact them because the UU sometimes doesn't know location specific details. I also reached out to former exchange students from the locations I was interested in.

#### academic preparation

There are not a lot of requirements. Just make the academic plan of your courses like the University asks you to. If you later change things that's okay but it is nice to have a bit of an overview so that you don't forget to schedule in obligated courses that are given in specific semesters for when you come back.

#### language preparation

It helps a lot to have a background in Spanish (basics is fine but the more experience the better you can 'integrate' in Mexico of course!). The UdG does not have many courses in English and my class mates could not talk English either.

#### finances

I got a nice checklist from Geosciences before I went with financial stuff I needed to take care of. I don't know all details, but one tip is to ask for compensation for your OV; you will get something like €100 each month because you can't use your OV in the Netherlands.

### STUDY ABROAD PERIOD



study programme (content and organisational issues)
<p>Keep in mind that planning and organisation in general in Mexico is..... different. I had a lot of trouble finding the website with available courses, descriptions, and details like when and where they were given. In the reports before me I had read that it's quite easy to change courses. However, it was not always that easy to change it (disclaimer: it really depends on the person of UdG that you are in contact with and with not-easy I mean that it usually takes time). We got to Guadalajara a few days before the uni started but only got access to our schedule with times and locations like 2 days before, and I remember that some students did not receive anything and had to wait like two weeks and had to contact the university a lot (so again, your own initiative is very important to solve issues). Some classes were at 7 in the morning or super far away and that kind of scared us haha. So, because of that and other reasons other students wanted to change courses. If you also have that problem I recommend going to the website and look for another course that you want to do instead (keep timing, faculty, credits and location in mind) and send an email with the offer to change it directly. This way you avoid waiting for a response that you need to find a new course and then waiting for a response again etc. For questions regarding UdG I recommend contacting Gared Benneth (coordinator UdG of European students) because he responds super-fast.</p>
academic quality of education activities
<p>The quality of education is also... different haha. It is lower for sure, but also varies highly. You have a lot of different courses and teachers and sometimes the same course has 5 classes with different teachers. The way of teaching and what the teacher values important is just super different. For example, I had one class with a lot of interaction in which we had to present a lot (help), but also one in which only the teacher gave presentations like in a 'hoorcollege' at UU, but then in a small classroom with 10 people. My classes were quite small, around 10-20 people, which I liked. A lot reminded me more of high school. Everything for me was in Spanish (like almost all classes at UdG) and I was the only exchange student in all of my classes. Sometimes this was a bit difficult, but people will understand it if you don't get it or have questions.</p>
counselling & support at receiving university abroad
<p>I think I already summed up some of the issues with the receiving university. You just have to be patient and accept that things usually take more time and are less clear than you're used to. I know it can be annoying in urgent situations but when it is urgent, I think they will always help you, especially people like the exchange coordinator. Discussing things with other students who might have the same problem also helps and you can try to fix it together.</p>
transfer of credits
<p>As I already had all the credits for my bachelor's diploma and did not have time to wait for a transfer (needed my diploma for my master right away) I did not transfer my credits to the UU and don't know a lot about this process. However, even though it usually takes a lot of time to receive a document of your grades from the UdG, I received mine already after I think 1,5 months.</p>

## STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme
<p>Firstly, I highly recommend going to Guadalajara 2/3 weeks before the university starts so you can find a place and meet people already. Because I only got permission to go in covid times 3 weeks before school started everything was a bit chaotic. My first 3 weeks of school were also online, so I did not have a normal welcoming experience (everything was online). Usually, the University has a welcoming day and I think it is super nice to go there. Then I believe there is also a welcoming day of your faculty!</p>
accommodation



Like I said my beginning was a bit chaotic, so this also accounts for finding a place to live. Normally you can take your time to visit different houses and already meet people to maybe find a place with. Me and my fellow UU students went on a speed house tour around the city (to I think 5 houses or something) and ended up living together. Guadalajara has a lot of student accommodations, and the prices are much lower than in Europe. There is a special organization that provides international student housing called Connexion. They also organize lots of parties and activities! I eventually chose not to live in such a house because the organization itself decides when there is going to be a party in your house, and the houses usually are super big (20+ people), but also luxurious! You can meet a lot of people here and you should check out the website to see if it is something for you. Available connexion houses are on the website, and you can already book one, but keep in mind you won't see the place/people before. As for location, I lived in Chapultepec (also Colonia Americana: going-out centre) which I loved and recommend. It doubted between the centre but find Chapu a bit more relax, safe, 'hip' and the fact that it is close to all the bars is of course a big plus. Because Chapu has a lot of different residents I felt more relax walking down the street as a blond woman then in the centre which more traditional. But that is my opinion, the centre is also nice. I think Zapopan is a bit far, maybe your faculty is close but then you're not close to the centre/cubs. Other neighbourhoods I don't know a lot about.

#### leisure & culture

The city of Guadalajara is a big highlight when it comes to history and culture!! A lot of the typical Mexican traditions stem from this region like tequila and mariachi. There is so much to see and do, also in the surrounding area. It is super different than more touristic places in Mexico, which makes it unique. People are amazing, food is amazing. I can talk about this subject for hours, but I think it is best if you'll see it for yourself ;)

#### suggestions/tips

##### Suggestions:

- Tlaquepaque
- Barranca de Huentitán
- A free walking tour around the city with my friend Checo through Hostal Hospedarte
- Tequila pueblo
- Guanajuato
- The beach (especialy San Pancho)
- There are multiple waterfalls around the city but I don't know the name
- Restaurant Habanero Negro
- Local football match
- Chapala/Ajijic

## CONCLUSIONS

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

I would highly recommend doing this exchange, it was, super original I know, one of the best decisions of my life.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

- As there was not a note on safety, I just want to say that you should not walk home outside of the safer areas when its dark, also not with multiple people. Ask locals which places are safe/less safe.
- Don't do stupid things with drugs like transportation to other states, because yes, narcos is real
- Don't lose your visa (the small paper you get with the days you're allowed to stay)



faculty/college	Humanities (Centro Universitario de Ciencias Sociales y Humanidades)
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	Communication and Information Sciences

destination city & country	Guadalajara, Mexico
how did you travel to and from your destination?	By plane
name university abroad	Universidad de Guadalajara (UdeG)
start date	07/ 01 / 2020 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	01/ 06 / 2020 (dd/mm/yyyy)

## PREPARATION

### exchange application process

The application process is not that difficult or extensive. The website from the UdeG clearly states which documents are needed for your application and which courses you can follow. However, I would recommend getting started early with your application process because a lot of the documents need some signatures or stamps on them. Uploading all the documents was really easy and could be done online, which was very efficient.

### counselling & support at Utrecht University

The support at Utrecht University was great. The international officer of my region really guided me throughout the application process and helped me with any questions and doubts I had.

### academic preparation

I didn't really have to do any academic preparation, besides making the study plan and getting it approved. For my studies it didn't really matter which courses I chose at UdeG, and the courses I ended up taking didn't have any requirements.

### language preparation

I didn't really do a lot with regards to language preparation, as I was already fluent in Spanish. I did experience that it was really helpful to speak Spanish as it makes it a lot easier to connect to others (who don't always speak English). People are super friendly, patient and willing to help you, so don't worry too much if your Spanish isn't fluent when you arrive in Mexico.

### finances

Living in Mexico is a lot cheaper than in the Netherlands. My rent was around €175 per month and food and transport is quite cheap. However, I would recommend saving up so that you'll have enough money to travel as much as you want. Because of the long distances in Mexico and higher prices in touristic areas, travelling can be a bit more on the expensive side. But it's all worth it!

## (interrupted) STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

### welcome & orientation programme

First, I had a welcome meeting for my faculty, Humanities, which at UdeG is known as 'CUCSH' (Centro Universitario de Ciencias Sociales y Humanidades). During this meeting we received some important information about the faculty itself, who to contact when you're having doubts and which extracurricular activities are offered. We also met up with the tutors that had previously been assigned to us. These students



helped international students find their way throughout the faculty of humanities, organized fun activities to get to know other international students and helped with signing up for classes. There was also a general welcome day for all faculties, which was not that informative, but there were free tacos and a mariachi-band was playing which made it worthwhile.

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

The study plan I made before going on exchange changed a lot once I got there. I did follow some courses that I originally planned on following, but I also took up some new courses. Signing yourself up for courses and creating your own schedule takes quite some time, because you have to make sure that there's no overlay in courses. Once you've chosen your courses, your tutor will help you sign up for them.

#### academic quality of education activities

The academic quality of the courses I have taken at UdeG were lower than at the UU. The way of teaching was also very different, it was a lot more practical and interactive, which in a way reminded me a bit of high school. We also did most of the work in class, so we would read literature, do assignments or get started on reports. This gave me quite a lot of free time to explore Mexico.

#### transfer of credits

At this moment, my transfer of credits is not yet completed.

## CORONAVIRUS CONSEQUENCES

#### support guidance of host university

The Universidad de Guadalajara suspended all activities and started offering online classes. They were very understanding of the difficult decision international students had to make – to stay or go home – and in my case, assured me that I would be able to complete my courses remotely. I ended up deciding to go back to the Netherlands in the end of march, and my teachers were very supportive and told me that I didn't have to catch up the homework and lessons I missed due to my journey back home.

#### support guidance of home university

The UU regularly updated us on the situation in the Netherlands and provided students abroad with advice and tips. Later in the semester they offered all UU-students that were abroad financial compensation for their flights back to NL, which was a very generous offer.

#### online offer and quality of digital courses

Due to the Coronavirus, the UdeG offered some of their courses online. For 3 out of my 5 classes, I had weekly Zoom-meetings that were quite similar to the lessons that were previously given in person. For my other courses I had to hand in a summary of the literature that was provided each week.

#### suggestions/tips on digital exchange

When selecting courses, make sure to keep in mind that there is a time difference so that you won't have classes late at night. Moreover, as a lot of classes have several assignments in groups, it would be useful to communicate clearly with group members with regards to when you're going to discuss/work on the assignments. This is especially relevant when members of your group live in different countries and time zones.

## CONCLUSIONS

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

Yes, I would definitely recommend going to Guadalajara. I have had the time of my life, even when it was cut short due to the Coronavirus. Mexico has so much to offer, I would really recommend you to explore this beautiful country as much as you can! Try not to worry too much about the safety. Yes, Mexico isn't the



Netherlands and is more dangerous. But if you're careful, conscious and take precautions (such as not going outside alone at night and always letting your friends know where you are) you should be fine.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

I would recommend joining one of the many organizations for international students, such as 'Integrate' or 'Conexion'. These organisations provide housing and organise parties and several trips. I lived in a Conexion house, which for me was a great way to meet a lot of other international students as well as Mexicans that have become really good friends. Most of all, enjoy every single moment of your exchange!



## UU Study Abroad Report Form

faculty/college	Law
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's
name study programme	Rechtsgeleerdheid
destination city & country	Guadalajara ,      Mexico
name university abroad	Universidad de Guadalajara
start date	15 /      01 /      2019      (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	15 /      12 /      2019      (dd/mm/yyyy)

  

PREPARATION
exchange application process
<p>The exchange application was pretty easy. It seems like the UdG is not the most popular destination as I believe there were even places left over after the second round of applications. This university was my first choice, as it was the only one available in Mexico and that's where I wanted to go. I faced some issues regarding the planning I'd made - I wanted to go all of 2019, thus going for two semesters in two different academic years. This is not commonly done and might not actually be possible for all universities, but luckily the International Office made it work.</p>
counselling & support at Utrecht University
<p>Apart from the issue stated above, I didn't really need much support from the International Office. I actually think we have only been in contact once during my entire year there.</p>
academic preparation
<p>I didn't prepare anything academically for my time in Guadalajara. Looking back this was perfectly fine, I didn't need to prepare anything.</p>
language preparation
<p>My level of Spanish before going was at around a B2 level. I studied pretty intensely before going, mainly because I didn't want to arrive without being able to participate in class.</p>
finances
<p>Mexico isn't very expensive. So spending around 500 euros a month is actually a pretty reasonable budget. But like anywhere around the world, you can make it as expensive as you want it to be. I didn't have to purchase any books or special supply for the university, this may differ per field of study. I did get a temporary resident visa (1 year) and for this I needed (I believe) 3000 euros on my savings account for at least the past 3 months. But you can easily go without such a visa (visitors are allowed entry into Mexico for 180 days, after which you could easily take a trip to a nearby country, re-enter, and renew your visa for another 180 days).</p>
STUDY ABROAD PERIOD
study programme (content and organisational issues)
<p>All the classes I took were part of their bachelor of laws, these classes were given at the CUCSH campus (old - please be aware when choosing your classes, you don't want classes in different campuses). There were multiple classes available about international law. When choosing classes, don't worry too much about taking a class which requires you to have taken other classes beforehand, the university really doesn't care.</p>
academic quality of education activities
<p>The academic quality of the UdG is A LOT lower than at the UU. A lot. So please don't go here and expect classes to be at a similar level or to be even nearly as organized as those at the UU. This doesn't mean that you won't learn anything, but at least at the law faculty, the classes were pretty bad. You spend an entire semester</p>



<p>covering about as much information as you would do in Utrecht in like 1-2 weeks. What also doesn't help is that a lot of the (law) professors rarely show up. For some of my classes this simply meant that I didn't learn anything.</p> <p>All this doesn't mean that I wouldn't recommend going to Mexico. Almost everything else is actually really great. I'd only wish that the UU would find a different university there to connect with, as this one is not very good.</p>
counselling & support at receiving university abroad
<p>The people working at the university are very nice. But if you need anything to get done, it will take like 2-3 months. Don't expect to receive your transcript quickly. If something goes wrong with you being in the system, it will take them months to fix, etc. etc. etc.</p>
transfer of credits
<p>This very much differs per faculty. In general this goes just fine. But again, they're slow</p>
<b>STUDENT LIFE</b>
welcome & orientation programme
<p>I didn't have any of this as I arrived 1-2 weeks after the semester started. (still had exams in Utrecht)</p>
accommodation
<p>It is very easy to find a room in Guadalajara. Please do check the neighborhood though! Prices starting from 4000 pesos should be normal (depending on the neighborhood). My room was very spacious, I had my own bathroom, 5 minutes from the campus (by Uber) and was in a rather safe location, all for \$5000 a month.</p>
leisure & culture
<p>Culturally there is not a crazy amount to do inside Guadalajara (except if you count parties, you can find one at every time of the day, any day of the week). But outside of Guadalajara you can find very lovely towns where there is more to do culturally. Also it is easy to travel from Guadalajara to other parts of the country (either by bus or by plane).</p> <p>For fun, most people would party (lots of parties...) or maybe go to the movies (a lot cheaper than here).</p>
suggestions/tips
<p>Don't just trust everyone there. Don't just go for a casual walk where it's not super safe. Be nice and polite to people. Also if you don't have a great sense for danger, get some friends quickly that do have it or develop one quickly.</p> <p>Guadalajara is not dangerous at all, if you know what you can and cannot do. Absolutely nothing happened to me the entire year. But I didn't interact with people the way I would in the Netherlands.</p> <p>Also, please only hang out with people you trust. It's important. Don't go to unknown places with people you don't feel completely comfortable with! Many of the exchange students hang out with only other exchange students. I didn't do this, but only because I already knew people in Mexico that I knew I could trust and I build friendships with their friends.</p> <p>Don't take regular taxi's, unless you have no other choice (and if so really make sure it is an official taxi and you feel comfortable around the driver), it is better to take Uber (also it's very cheap there).</p> <p>Learn Spanish! Although you'll learn a lot while you're there, I imagine it being very very difficult to go there without at least being able to have a basic conversation.</p>
<b>CONCLUSIONS</b>
would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain
<p>The destination absolutely! The country is so much more than what you read in the news and the people are some of the kindest out there. This past year has truly expanded my horizons and taught me so much. Yet I</p>



do not recommend the university. The people there are lovely, but the quality is seriously low. I wish the UU would connect with a different university in Mexico as there are many better ones that would love to connect with the UU. But if you want what I wanted, a year to develop yourself and grow as a person (and perfect your Spanish) this is a great destination. Don't go to the UdG for great education, but go to Mexico for the experience.



## UU Study Abroad Report Form

level	bachelors
name study programme	Double degree, sociology and Law

destination city & country	Guadalajara, Mexico
name university abroad	UDG, CUCSH
start date	4 / 8 / 2019 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	1 / 1 / 2020 (dd/mm/yyyy)

### PREPARATION

#### exchange application process

In the beginning of the process I failed to fill in the form of my first three choices correctly. I made a minor mistake but this caused the form to be sent back to me. Because I failed to check my email in time I noticed this too late which almost caused me not being able to go to Guadalajara. So My advice in general would be to start on time and always check your email with this process. You don't want to miss this great experience due to a stupid mistake! The first deadline is of the exchange application process it is to fill in your first 3 choices of your exchange program (in which you also have to fill in a study planning and some other small stuff). The first step doesn't take that much time in my experience

The second deadline of your exchange application process is your application at the university abroad. This is a little bit more difficult. You have to have (from what I recall from memory ) an academic reference, a prove of Spanish speaking and a transcript of your results in English and Spanish signed by the head of exchange affairs of your region. This take a little bit more time so you should start on time with this! The annoying thing about this all in my opinion is that I am almost sure nobody in Guadalajara actually looks at the documents you sent. But I would still recommend you to be exacts with this as you shouldn't take any risks.

#### counselling & support at Utrecht University

I was impressed by the continuous support from the Exchange Coordinator at the time. Even though I missed my first deadline for the application she still managed to get me in my program for my first choice.

#### academic preparation

I didn't made any academic preparations

#### language preparation

I went to the Spanish courses B1 and B2 at the bachelor degree of the Spanish at the UU in the second semester (A1, and A2 are available in the first semester). This classes helped me a lot to understand the grammar. I also found a language exchange partner in Spain to practise my speaking <https://www.mylanguageexchange.com/>. This I would also recommend

#### finances

I saved some money and I also lended 1000 euros a month from the Dutch government. I spent on average 1500 a month. I believe this spending is definitely above average

### STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

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

I took some cultural course in the direction of philosophy and history. Even though these don't necessarily fit in with my own study program I believe that an exchange like this is also a good opportunity to follow some



courses outside your own career. I wasn't that hard to find the courses as the universities will present you all the tools to find the courses you need. I would like to add is that Guadalajara is a big city and UDG has a lot of different locations for their different faculties spread out all over the city

academic quality of education activities

My expectations of the quality of education weren't high. These low expectations were met. Some classes were interesting, some were not. A way around this would be to choose a lot of classes in the beginning and after the first few weeks dropping the "bad" classes

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

The communication isn't that good at all. Garrett (the head of exchange student affairs in Guadalajara) was very helpful.

## STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

There were two meetings for new students. Both of these started late and were not that interesting

leisure & culture

Guadalajara is a great city with amazing nightlife. The strong Latin culture, which I love, is very much present. The people are warm and friendly and they love to dance to Latin music. The warming and welcoming nature of these people give you a great opportunity to discover this new culture (speaking Spanish will help you though, this isn't necessary though)

The less positive side of the culture in Mexico is that everything can go very slow and things are badly organised. If you can't handle this don't go to Mexico.

suggestions/tips

Safety:

Even though I always felt very safe and my friends and I didn't have any serious incidents around safety, Guadalajara can be dangerous. Try not to get too drunk, a lot of times this is the time accidents happen. And for the girls: try not to be alone at night, have somebody with you if this is possible. But also: don't worry too much! I lived with 21 people in a house and the worst thing that happened was a stolen phone

Housing:

You have two big organisations that offer housing and activities to international students. Integrate and Connexion. Personally I only have experience with Connexion as I lived in a connexion house. But I think these two organisations are more or less the same. They ask the same prices for houses and host more or less exactly the same activities. The nice things about these organisations is that they give you the chance to meet and live with other exchange students who most likely have the same attitude as you: These people want to party a lot and discover Mexico, so living with other exchange students can definitely be a plus. Furthermore it is easy to book from outside of Mexico.

The downside is that almost all of the exchange students from these organisations are European. It is bad for learning Spanish and to learn Latin/Mexican culture. Also the houses are a little bit on the expensive side.

I however didn't regret living in a connexion house. I made a lot of great friends here and still got the chance to meet a lot of Mexicans regardless. The parties and trips were okay for me, not that special. I personally prefer parties with more Mexicans.

## CONCLUSIONS



would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain
I hade a great experience. I would say these were more or less the best 6 months of my live. The university wasn't that great though.
do you have any additional advice or comments?
Don't go with to specific/high expectations and just go with the flow. My personal high/specific expectations led me to be a little uncertain/unhappy the first few weeks. Which in hindsight was just silly and unnecessary. Also really try to start learning Spanish in the Netherlands! It is naïve to think you can just learn all the Spanish in Mexico.



## UU Study Abroad Report Form

faculty/college	Humanities/GW
level	<input type="checkbox"/> bachelor's
name study programme	Language and Culturestudies (TCS)

destination city & country	Guadalajara, Mexico
name university abroad	Universidad de Guadalajara
start date	15 / 01 / 2019
end date	30 / 06 / 2019

### PREPARATION

#### exchange application process

From the beginning of my BA on I already knew I wanted to apply for an exchange. Since I had a huge interest in Latin America for most of my childhood, wanted to go outside of Europe and wanted to stay in a non-English speaking country, the choice for Guadalajara was easily made. There were six spots in Mexico for Dutch students, so luckily it was not too hard to get in

#### counselling & support at Utrecht University

UU was helpful during the preparation process, but in all honesty, the process wasn't necessarily difficult. For questions you could always reach out to the International Office.

#### academic preparation

I did my exchange in the end of my BA so my preparation on the academic level was fine.

#### language preparation

In the first year of my studies I did two Spanish courses, but I must say that I forgot most of that. In the summer before my exchange I went to Spain for a language school, which was really helpful, would recommend! It made me feel much more confident, even though I went only a short time. While my resolutions were to really keep practising in the six months after that, I practically didn't do anything on my Spanish, so I was a bit stressed about the level of my Spanish which at that time wasn't B1. This was not necessary at all since you pick it up fast. Mexican Spanish is easy to learn.

#### finances

My expenses in Mexico were definitely less than in Utrecht. Although the flight can be expensive, you can save on accommodation and grocery shopping. The weekends away are more expensive, but you could compensate this since life is cheap. Rooms are available for around 2000-4000 pesos which equals 100-200 euros, so that makes a difference.

### STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

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

I took only three courses in Guadalajara, so this were only 6 hours of class per week. You can do more if you want, they have interesting offers. The only thing is that the site of UdG doesn't provide course descriptions, so for me it was mostly hoping the courses would be ok (they were). As I said I was a bit worried about the level of my Spanish, but if you mention this to the teacher I don't think it will be a real problem. Sometimes you can write assignments in English, although it also is a cool challenge of course to do it in Spanish 😊 It wasn't a lot of work to finish the three courses and most of the final assignments were in the last month, so during the semester it was really



chill.
academic quality of education activities
Even though I had the best time in Guadalajara and I absolutely loved my exchange there, I have to say that the quality of education is low. I found the courses a bit unstructured and they don't make use of powerpoint so it is hard to follow. The exams were also mostly facts-based. Side note: the levels of the courses really differ and the quality of your course is very much dependent on your teacher.
counselling & support at receiving university abroad
Again, the UdG is not so well organized so at times it is all very vague. Teachers are late or just don't show up and don't communicate this with the students. It's all very messy
transfer of credits
For most of the courses you get between 6 and 8 credits. I believe those are being transferred directly to the UU.

## STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme
There are a few welcoming days in the beginning of the semester, this was fun!! The faculty I was on, CUCSH, also organizes trips during the semester. I wasn't really involved in this group and went only on one weekend-trip with them but I had a great time! They also organize parties.
accommodation
Since I didn't know what to expect from Guadalajara, I decided to arrange my accommodation beforehand at Integrate. This is an international students organization in Mexico, same as Conexion. However, the housing they offer is overpriced in comparison to regular rooms in Guadalajara, so I would definitely not recommend living with them! I decided to move after 6 weeks and found a much nicer place in the centre, with a bigger variation of nationalities (before I lived with 25 French people...) who also spoke more Spanish, so I was so happy I changed my housing. In comparison: the room I had with Integrate was 5000 (9m2) and after I got one for 3800 (15m2 and directly in the centre, close to CUCSH) I would advise to just book a hostel for the first days and search accommodation from there.
leisure & culture
I love Mexico, the culture, the people, the landscape, the food, everything. The culture makes up for everything and compensates the bad education. I think you can learn so much more from their much more chill way of living and the way they enjoy life.
suggestions/tips
Do a lot of weekend trips! weekends in Guadalajara are also great for parties. The zona Americana was definitely my favourite: lot of cool shops and cute (vegetarian) places to eat. This is close to Templo Experiatorio, go to this area!!

## CONCLUSIONS

would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain
I would definitely recommend the UdG to others. Guadalajara is a wonderful place to live and has so much to offer. Maybe it is not the most beautiful city ever, but once you get to know it you will love it.
do you have any additional advice or comments?
Don't let other people scare you with bad stories about Mexico!!! Of course, you have to be careful



and alert but Mexican people are so welcoming and will always help you. If you feel unsafe, just walk into a store and ask for help. Don't let the negative image of Mexico ruin your experience, create your own positive story! So enjoy it with everything you can!!




## 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

PREPARATION
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.

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## 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)



## 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

PREPARATION	
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



## 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 paid 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 classes, 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 it's 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 are beggars sleeping in the roads that means that it's 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 a lot of slack when I needed it. You can reduce the workload by 60% if needed.

#### 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 a lot. 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!