



UU Report form - Erasmus 2019-2020

faculty/college	Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	Onderwijswetenschappen / Educational Sciences

destination city & country	Helsinki, Finland
how did you travel to your destination?	By plane
name university abroad	University of Helsinki
start date	27 / 8 / 2019 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	15 / 12 / 2020 (dd/mm/yyyy)

PREPARATION

exchange application process

A few weeks after I was selected by Utrecht University for my exchange to Helsinki, I received an email from the University of Helsinki with the steps of the application procedure. The description was very clear and because of that, the application procedure wasn't that hard.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

Utrecht University organized a predeparture meeting for all students who planned a stay abroad. In this meeting, some general information about going on an exchange was given. Besides that, it was possible to follow the course 'Intercultural learning', to reflect on the intercultural experiences abroad. Lastly, the international office sent a monthly newsletter, in which attention was drawn to matters with regards to (for example) Erasmus.

academic preparation

Before I went to Finland, I had to hand in a preliminary Learning Agreement, with the courses I planned to follow at the University of Helsinki. Therefore, I looked up the course catalogues of the Faculty of Educational Sciences and other faculties, to decide which courses to choose.

language preparation

Finnish people speak English very well and English is one of the instruction languages at the University of Helsinki, so I tested my English language proficiency in the mandatory Online Language Support test, provided by the European Union.

finances

Because Finland is part of the European Union, I had the right to apply for an Erasmus grant. Finland belongs to the most expensive countries of Europe and therefore, the highest Erasmus funding is given to students who are going on exchange to Finland. Besides that, I worked a lot in summer, to make sure I had enough money.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)

Because Utrecht University had a contract with the University of Helsinki for the Faculty of Educational Sciences, most of the courses had to be chosen from the offer of that faculty. The courses offered by this faculty seemed to be very interesting, so I chose all my courses in this faculty, except the Finnish language course for



beginners. In one of the first days, teachers helped us to sign up for the courses in WebOodi, the Finnish equivalent of Osiris.

academic quality of education activities

The academic quality of education activities was good, although the way of teaching was sometimes very different compared to the Dutch way of teaching. For example, I didn't have traditional exams, but I had to give presentations, write learning diaries, and hand in papers to pass courses.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

The University of Helsinki was very supportive towards exchange students. A lot of introduction activities were organized, and our exchange group (37 people) had 5 student tutors, who guided us, organized activities to get to know the Finnish culture, habits, food etcetera, were always available for questions about studies and courses. A newsletter was sent by the international office every month, which consisted of academic stuff, but also about useful tips and tricks about for example how to deal with the darkness, or nice places to visit.

transfer of credits

At the University of Helsinki, ECTS credits are used, as well as in Utrecht. Therefore, credits do not need to be transferred. However, the way of grading in Finland is different: when you fail a course, you don't get a grade, when you pass a course, you get a grade from 1-5. This is the same as the Dutch grades 6-10.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

In the first week, there was a mandatory welcome fair and a mandatory faculty introduction, to get to know the university, student unions, and to get done all official stuff. The week ended with a party for both Finnish and exchange students.

accommodation

The University of Helsinki offered the possibility to apply for housing as part of your application. They have contracts with Hoas and Unihome, two student housing organisations. However, they mentioned that they don't have enough places for all students who apply for housing. I didn't get an offer, and therefore, I had to look for other options. In the end, I found a room via HousingAnywhere.

leisure & culture

I really liked the city of Helsinki. Everything is very wide and spacious, there is a lot of nature in the city, the city is very neat and tidy. There is a big historic centre, the sea fortress Suomenlinna is very close (and the ferry is for free with the public transport card). There are some cheap car rental options to go outside the city, and the long distance trains have a student discount. Student discount is very common in Helsinki, however going out for dinner or having a drink is still quite expensive.

suggestions/tips

In October, Helsinki Eats is organized. Very many restaurants offer dishes for only €10,00, which is a good option if you want to try some restaurants. Especially in summer, going to Suomenlinna is recommended. It is only 15 minutes by ferry from the city centre, and it feels like holiday. National park Nuuksio is also pretty close to the city, and real Finnish people go there very often on Saturdays, to hike and prepare food above a fire. In December, there is a big christmas market on the senate square, which is really cozy. And going to Tallinn (capital of Estonia) takes only 2 hours by ferry, which I really recommend.

CONCLUSIONS

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



I would really recommend going to Helsinki. The learning environment at the university is very positive, I loved the atmosphere in the city. I felt very comfortable in the city and university. When going on exchange in Helsinki, you won't become bored fast, but if you become bored, there is still a lot more to do outside the city.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

Before I decided which city I wanted to go to on exchange, someone who went on exchange earlier told me: 'The most important thing is that you feel comfortable in a city where you have to live for a semester. So look for pictures of the city and country on Google, so you get an idea of the atmosphere in the city.' That's what I did and for me, it worked pretty well, so I would recommend this to other students as well.



UU Report form - Erasmus 2018-2019

faculty/college	Social sciences
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	Pedagogical Sciences in Utrecht, but Educational Sciences in Helsinki

destination city & country	Helsingfors, Finland
name university abroad	Helsingin Yliopisto/University of Helsinki
start date	28 / 08 / 2018 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	21 / 12 / 2018 (dd/mm/yyyy)

PREPARATION

exchange application process

This was a bit difficult for me, because Helsinki was not in any of my three choices. Because the first three choices were all full, a second list was published with remaining places. Luckily for me, in the second round I got my first choice; Helsinki. I would recommend to begin early; it's not that much work to fill in the required documents, but keep an eye on the deadlines!

counselling & support at Utrecht University

International office was always there for me when I needed help. That was great, because I was unsure if I could even go on an exchange and they really supported me when I had questions about anything.

academic preparation

The study program at UU is much more difficult than in Finland, so I did not need to prepare more academically.

language preparation

I did not need any extra language preparation, because my English was already good enough before I left.

finances

It's nice that you get a grant of Erasmus, but this is certainly not enough to live from. I would recommend to save a lot of money, because everything in Finland is more expensive than in the Netherlands (especially alcohol). Also the rent is very expensive, for example I lived in a studio at Domus Academica, which was 600 euros per month. You probably also want to do some trips (Lapland for example), this is also quite expensive but definitely worth it!!

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)

The study programme changed a little bit when I arrived in Helsinki, so some people had to change their learning agreement, but a person from the University of Helsinki sent me an email when I was still in the Netherlands, saying that one course I picked, was deleted from the study program. This was nice, because I had enough time to change my learning agreement before I arrived in Helsinki. When something changed, for example course codes, you had to fill in the learning agreement again, with the right course codes and all the signatures. This was a bit annoying, but necessary in order to get the second part of the grant, so if anything changes; contact UU directly to ask if you need to change something in your documents as well.

academic quality of education activities



You certainly have to do something during your exchange, but the courses I followed did not have any exams, only essays. In the beginning this was a bit difficult because I was not used to write essays in English, but you get used to this quite quickly. In Utrecht, I don't have much free time because I have to do so many things for school, but in Helsinki I had enough time to go on nice trips and to go out multiple times a week. Many deadlines were after the semester ended (so after December 21st), I would plan to get everything done before you leave, so you can avoid stressing last minute at Christmas time (if you're going the first semester). Some people I know planned so many activities the last weeks that they had to finish their assignments at home and they regretted this a lot.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

There was always a contact person you could email if you had any questions or you could come to the Student Services at the Library, where you could ask everything about courses, to get signatures etc.

transfer of credits

I did not receive all my grades yet, but I expect that I passed all of my courses.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

The welcome programme was well organized, our group of Educational Sciences had five amazing tutors who helped us with everything and gave us recommendations about places to visit/eat/party etc during the whole semester (contact me if you want a list of things you can do in and around Helsinki). On the first day, there is a welcome fair where you have to do many mandatory things, but where you can also get lots of useful information about the city/gym/student organizations and the University.

accommodation

I lived at Domus Academica, which is a hostel during the Summer months and a student home from September 1st until the end of the second semester. I got this offer from Unihome a few weeks before I left and they said that this was the only offer I got. I accepted it, although it was really expensive (600 euros/month), because I heard it was really difficult to find something by yourself. When you arrive before September 1st, you can book a room at the Hostel Domus Academica and if you're lucky, you can keep that room for the rest of your exchange. I was really happy about the accomodation, it was very close to the city center and there was a cleaner who cleaned your room twice a month, changed you bed linen etc (partly because of this, it was so expensive). Many of my friends lived there as well, so that was really nice. Some people I met did not get an offer or refused it, and they found rooms far away from the city center, and they were really sad that they did not live at Domus Academica like the biggest part of the exchange students from the Faculty of Social Sciences did. However, if there is something wrong with your room (for example, everyone experienced difficulties with the wifi and in my room, one mirror was broken and the other one was missing), it takes a long time and many emails before they do something about it; I made a complaint on September 1st and they fixed it in November and after many people complained from August on, the problems with the wifi were partly fixed on December 14th. Other than that, the accomodation was very nice.

leisure & culture

Helsinki is not that big, so I would recommend to go on many trips (for example Tallinn, Porvoo, Turku) or with ESN on trips to Lapland (must see!) or Russia. I would book them early on in the semester so you have enough time to finish your assignments. The Finnish people did not really make a good impression to me, they are really introvert, but luckily all the Finns speak English very well and some Finns even talk to you (mostly in the saunas, make sure you visit as many saunas as you can, for example Sompä Sauna). At the University, the Finns are more open and willing to have a conversation with you.

suggestions/tips

- Go to café Regatta and try a cinnamon bun or a blueberry pie with vanilla sauce!! :)



- Go to Nuuksio and explore the nature in summer time, autumn and of course in the snow!
- Go to Seurasaari to feed the squirrels and birds
- Download the Aurora app for the Northern lights, we were lucky and saw it once in Helsinki and once in Vasatokka, Lapland; with the app you can see on which days the chance is the highest (Domus people, go to Hietaniemi beach, the place to see them!)
- If you get a room at Domus, make sure you pick much stuff from the first floor; the staff from the hostel stores all the stuff there a few days before September 1st from former exchange students or guests from the hostel, because sometimes you don't get that much stuff from Domus for your kitchen (I didn't even receive cutlery). So, I would ask the staff when they will place all the stuff there, so you are the first one to get plates, cutlery, cleaning soap etc for free!
- Last but not least; if you go to Helsinki from September till December, make sure you buy enough lights and candles and plan many trips in November, because that is the darkest month of the year (maybe you need some vitamine D pills as well).

CONCLUSIONS

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

Yes! Finland is an amazing country with beautiful nature and many things to do! Definitely go to events organized by ESN, because then you get to meet more people and see new things.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

Finnish is a hard language to learn, but with the words Kiitos and Kippis you will survive for sure ;) If you have any questions, feel free to contact me; feliciaplum@hotmail.com



UU Report form - Erasmus 2017-2018

faculty/college	Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	Interdisciplinary Social Sciences

destination city & country	Helsinki, Finland
name university abroad	University of Helsinki
start date	29 / 08 / 2017 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	22 / 12 / 2017 (dd/mm/yyyy)

PREPARATION

exchange application process

In order to apply for an exchange I just followed the steps given on the UU website, which made the process quite easy. For me, making the decision where to go and after that getting all the required documents in order took some time, so the earlier you begin with these things the better.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

The general information evening about going abroad as well as the pre-departure meeting were well-organized and helpful. Also, the International Office always answered my e-mails with questions very quickly.

academic preparation

Additional academic preparation was not necessary for my host university.

language preparation

I did not do any language preparation because my English was already good enough. You don't need to speak Finnish as almost everyone you will meet in Finland speaks English very well.

finances

Living expenses in Helsinki are definitely higher than in Utrecht. Especially when you are interested in doing some trips while staying in Finland, I would recommend to save some money beforehand.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)

I had some struggles with signing up for courses, as did a lot of my fellow students. There aren't that many English courses and they often allow only a limited amount of students. So make sure to start signing up for courses as soon as possible. Also, be aware of the fact that the courses you see on their website while you're in the middle of your application process might not be taught anymore the next year, although there will probably be new interesting courses as well.

academic quality of education activities

The academic quality of the courses I took was similar to the UU in my opinion.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

The staff and teachers at the University of Helsinki were all very friendly and approachable.

transfer of credits



I just received my last grade this week and am now waiting for the Univeristy of Helsinki to send it to me by mail, so I don't know yet how this will work out.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

The Univeristy of Helsinki organizes an introduction week, to get the know the univeristy, the city and other students. You will be placed in a tutorgroup with other exchange students, and you're Finnish tutor will show you around and answer any questions you might still have. At the Welcome Fair, which you will visit together, you can sort out all of your administrative and organisational stuff at once, which is really nice (just keep in mind that as an exchange student you don't need to become a member of the HYY/Student Union to receive student discounts, this saves you quite some money).

accommodation

Most exchange students I knew either lived in a Hoas or a Unihome apartment. Rooms and studios in these buildings are only rented to international students, they are well-located and relatively cheap. So definitely take the offer if they give you one! If you get rejected you will have to search for a place to stay on the private market, which is often more expensive and further away from the city.

leisure & culture

There is plenty of things do to while staying in Helsinki! Although the city is quite expensive, there are ways to keep it affordable. Most museums have certain days on which they are free, just check out their websites. Sauna is great and often free too! Nightlife is expensive due to the high alcohol prices, but bars in Kallio are still relatively affordable. A lot of Finns and international students also go to Tallinn by boat to buy cheap alcohol. Other fun trips you can easily make from Helsinki are Stockholm, Lapland, St. Petersburg and Moscow. But also don't forget Finland itself, as it has some beautiful cities (Porvoo, Tampere) and nature (lots of islands, Nuuksio National park) too.

suggestions/tips

Become an ESN member for fun trips and acitivities with other international students. Also: buy a bike! Although it can be quite cold in winter, it is a good way to explore the city.

CONCLUSIONS

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

I would definitely recommend going to Helsinki on exchange if you're interested in going to a city which is not that big, surrounded by nature, with excellent public transport, good education and lots of saunas.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

Don't hesitate to contact me if you still have any questions about studying in Helsinki!



UU Report form - Erasmus 2016-2017

faculty/college	Faculty of social sciences
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	Psychology

destination city & country	Helsinki, Finland
name university abroad	University of Helsinki
start date	26 / 08 / 2017 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	21 / 12 / 2017 (dd/mm/yyyy)

PREPARATION

exchange application process

To start the exchange application process, you need to upload your CV and your motivation letter on Osiris. Also, you need to give a top three of your favorite destinations. It is important to do some research before filling in your top three. Some universities require for example a specific GPA or offer only specific subjects. On the internet you can also find the ratings of universities. These are all factors that may influence your decision. Then it is time to wait for your destination. As soon as you decide to go to the destination you received, the application at the receiving university starts. Just like the UU, they also request various documents. Besides, you need to book your ticket, search for a place to live there, sort out your finances (how are you going to afford your exchange?), rent your room in Utrecht, etc. Luckily the UU sends several online newsletters before you go with all the information on things you should not forget to do before leaving.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

The support that the International Office from the faculty of Social Sciences offers is very helpful. I had quite some questions and I sent them a lot of emails but they always replied soon and helped me wherever they could.

academic preparation

Concerning academic preparation, you need to do some research on the courses you would like to follow on the receiving university. If you've made a nice overview for yourself, you can fill in your learning agreement and upload that document on Osiris.

language preparation

Since Finnish people speak English very well and all the matters regarding university, such as lectures, exams, etcetera, are all in English, it is not necessary to learn the Finnish language. You do, however, need to be able to speak English on a sufficient level.

finances

Since Finland is not really an holiday destination, mostly businessmen go there. That is the reason why only expensive airline companies, such as KLM, provide flights to Helsinki (f.e. Ryanair, Transavia and Easyjet don't). So you need to keep in mind that your ticket will be probably over 200 euros (depends on when you book of course). Furthermore, life in Finland is more expensive than in the Netherlands. Think about groceries and especially alcohol. However, if you just decide to do your grocery shopping at the Lidl, it will not make such a big difference. Also, Finland is a social country and you'll notice this in the very cheap lunch that the university offers its students. I would really recommend you to do that. The food is good and the portions are big. Furthermore, public transport is cheap for students as well as an internet databundle for on your cell-phone.



STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)

The university of Helsinki offers many interesting courses. Not only the University of Helsinki, also the Swedish school of Social Sciences offers courses in English, which you can easily follow. At the University of Helsinki you subscribe for courses each period. This is different from the Universiteit Utrecht where you subscribe for one semester. At the beginning of your stay, you'll get explained how to subscribe for courses. However, it can happen that the courses you initially want to follow are not available anymore due to overlap or to the fact that they are simply not given anymore. This can be a bit confusing at first, but if you take your time to sort this out you'll manage for sure. If not, you can always ask your tutor to help you!

academic quality of education activities

The quality of education in Finland is very good. It is comparable to the quality of Dutch education. I had some Southern European friends there and they told me that it was rather difficult for them to cope with the expectations of the professor. For example, they were not used to reading articles before a seminar or actively participate in a discussion. Since we are used to these things in the Netherlands, you can easily handle the level of education.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

The University of Helsinki is very helpful and friendly. As I already said, your tutor is the first person you can ask your questions to, but also professors and the International Office there is willing to help you at any time.

transfer of credits

The transfer of credits is very easy to arrange. You just email the University of Helsinki and ask them if they can send your transcript of records to your home University. As soon as the the Universiteit Utrecht received your transcript, they will translate your grades into Dutch grades and upload these in Osiris. Also, they send you a letter with the grades that you earned during your stay in Helsinki.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

The first day that you are expected at the University, you will have a welcoming meeting in one of the University buildings. You'll receive some information and will be placed in a tutorgroup. The people in this tutorgroup will probably be the people that you will be seeing most of the time during your stay. Together with your group, you will visit the welcome fair, organized by the University of Helsinki for all exchange students. This is really helpful since you can sort out everything you need to do in once. However, there are many exchange students coming to Helsinki, so this day will mostly consist of standing and waiting in lines. The first week will consist of an orientation programme. This includes for example a tour around the city and a tour around the university in specific. Furthermore, it will mostly be meeting new people, having fun and going out! I would like to point out that the university's website is really helpful too. Here you can find all the information regarding your stay and if you still have questions, you can always ask the International Office of the University of Helsinki or the UU.

accommodation

The University of Helsinki offers student housing for which you can subscribe. However, the amount of exchange students is way bigger than the amount of places they offer. Therefore, I would advise you to subscribe early. Unfortunately, I did not get an offer for student housing provided by the University. At the moment, that can be quite stressful but in the end everybody finds a place to live. Some other student, who had studied in Helsinki too, recommended me to like several facebookgroups. On one of these facebookpages all the advertisements were in Finnish. However, I copy-pasted all the advertisements in Google translate and that way I achieved my desired result: I found a beautiful house that I could rent for the semester. If you don't hear anything from the University of Helsinki for some time, I would strongly recommend you to e-mail them,



since I was not informed that I didn't get an offer. The sooner you know that you've got to find a place to live yourself, the better.

leisure & culture

At first, the city of Helsinki could come across as colourless and dark. However, if you give it a fair chance you will soon find out that it has some beautiful places. The senatesquare with the great white cathedral is impressive and surely worth a visit. Throughout the city there are some interesting churches to visit too, such as the Rock Church, the Kallio Church and the Chapel of Silence, close to Kamppi. Also Suomenlinna, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, is a must see. This fortress, accessed by ferry from the Helsinki Market Square, has beautiful nature and lovely museums, cafes and restaurants. Don't forget to visit the beach with its beautiful sunsets.

Finland is famous for its saunas. You can find some really nice saunas in the city centre, such as Kaurilan sauna and Kotiharju sauna. The last one even provides washing ladies that scrub you. Besides, you can get massages and other treatments there. A recommendation after a long day of studying!

Next to sauna, Helsinki also has many karaokebars. Finns love karaoke! If you like to sing or if you like to listen to people singing, you should definitely check this out. My favourite karaoke place was Swengi.

suggestions/tips

Now I will list some things that I really enjoyed during my stay and that I would recommend if you visit Helsinki: Café Regatta is a very small cosy place near the beach, which is perfect for a cup of tea or hot chocolate and a korvapuusti, a traditional Finnish cinnamon roll. It is also very romantic and a good place for a date!

For dinner, I would recommend to visit the market halls. There are several ones in the city. I went several times to the Hietalahti Market, which is really nice and has very good fresh food. On top of that, it is affordable, which is quite extraordinary in Helsinki. On Saturday's they offer 'Tunes 'n Tasting', then a DJ provides the music in the hall. Further, Helsinki has many good sushi places. These places are relatively cheap, due to the city's location at the water.

Last but not least, Helsinki offers many possibilities to enjoy a relaxing swim. In the heart of the city, close to the harbour, you can find the Allas Sea Pool, boasting several saunas, swimming pools and a restaurant. I used to go to the Yrjönkatu Swimming Hall, which has the atmosphere of a Roman Bath.

If you have friends over or you are just looking for something fun to do with your friends, go to the website: www.visithelsinki.fi. Here you can find all the events and activities in Helsinki!

CONCLUSIONS

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

Yes, I would recommend this University to others because it is a good university and the level of education is high. To follow courses here is informative and contributes certainly to your knowledge about your studies. The destination is also nice, because there is enough to do in Helsinki and its surrounding cities and it is something completely different. Only you should not have to high expectations about the city, since the city is not really beautiful.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

I would advise you to take advantage of the fact that you are there and to see as much as possible, not only from Finland but also from surrounding countries! If you have the money and time, visit Lapland! Lapland is amazing and breathtakingly beautiful and you will love it for sure. Moreover, try to visit Stockholm and St. Petersburg. You will not regret it, i'll promise.



UU Report form - Erasmus 2016-2017

faculty/college	University of utrecht: faculty of social sciences
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	interdisciplinary social sciences
destination city & country	Helsinki, Finland
name university abroad	University of Helsinki
start date	31 / 09 / 2016 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	23 / 12 / 2016 (dd/mm/yyyy)

PREPARATION

exchange application process
It was rather easy to apply. I got enough support from my home university and from the university of Helsinki
counselling & support at Utrecht University
Good!
academic preparation
Not a lot. I was in my third year of my bachelor so I already had a lot of knowledge about social sciences
language preparation
My skills of English were already good enough to go without preparation
finances
The erasmus scholarships, savings and i get money from the Dutch government to study still.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)
I did a lot of psychology classes. I Found that there were not a lot of classes in English and there were many classes with timetable conflicts.
academic quality of education activities
Good. They are open to help you anytime you need.
counselling & support at receiving university abroad
Good. They were friendly and responded quick./
transfer of credits
It was okay my university made some grades a bit lower then they were in Finland. I got a 5 (1 okay- 5 extremely good) and that was transferred to a 9 (1 really bad -10 extremely good) instead of a 10.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme



Good. We got tutors and came in an international tutor group and that was nice to get to know people
accommodation
It was okay. Not everybody got a room and if you didn't get one it was kind of hard to find a room by yourself.
leisure & culture
Nice. Finnish people are really friendly they seem kind of cold before you get to know them but they just need to get to know you.
suggestions/tips
Join students clubs on the university!

CONCLUSIONS
would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain
Yes, The education was really good and it is a nice academic atmosphere around the university.
do you have any additional advice or comments?
Save a lot of money. Finland is really expensive.



UU Report form - Erasmus 2015-2016

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

destination city & country	Helsinki, Finland
name university abroad	University of Helsinki
start date	14 / 01 / 2016 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	31 / 05 / 2016 (dd/mm/yyyy)

PREPARATION

exchange application process

The application takes some time and it's smart to start early if you know you want to go on an exchange. During the exchange and after there are also some things that you need to take care of. It's the easiest to know beforehand what things you need to do and have signed. This will make it a lot easier.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

The counselling and support from Utrecht were good. It would've been nice if it was a bit more clear what we needed to have signed and when the deadlines are etc. On the other hand when you needed to let anything sign or when you have any questions they would always answer quick.

academic preparation

I didn't do any kind of academic preparation for the exchange

language preparation

I didn't do any kind of language preparation, my english was already on a good enough level. If you like to learn some Finnish beforehand, the university of Helsinki offers a free online crash course in Finnish.

finances

If you decide to go to Finland it's smart to have some money saved because Finland is not the cheapest country to live in. I also did some trips to other countries and it's nice if you also have the money for that.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)

The biggest problem I faced with the study program is the fact that you will be placed in the department of social sciences as a psychology student. At the university of Utrecht social sciences and behavioural sciences are one department but in Helsinki they are separated into two departments. I do the track neuropsychology and would've liked to follow more courses in this area. But when you're in the department of social sciences you have to take half of the courses in this department, what is mainly about social psychology. And unfortunately was this not really my interest.

academic quality of education activities

The academic quality of the education in Finland is good. I have to say that it's a bit different than I was used to. The education is more seminar like and with smaller groups and they are a big fan of essays as exam form.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad



The counselling is good, if you have any questions the coordinator will always reply fast and otherwise you can always go to the main international exchange officer where you can walk in every weekday.

transfer of credits

I haven't done this yet because i'm still awaiting one grade.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

The welcome and orientation programme was nice. You will be put in a group with some other people and you will spend a whole day taking care of organisational stuff and getting to know each other in the meanwhile as well

accommodation

Most exchange students were living in a building from either HOAS or were living in DOMUS. I was living in a nice HOAS apartment with two flatmates 15 minutes from the city center. But most of the HOAS buildings are quite near to the city center.

leisure & culture

Finland is a nice country, try to visit some places like Turku, Tampere or Porvoo and definitely go on a trip to Lapland. It's also nice to visit some cities in neighbouring countries like Stockholm, Tallinn or St. Petersburg. Try some karaoke out in Finland it's very popular and of course the sauna! The nightlife is also nice there are many bars and clubs you can go to.

suggestions/tips

If you get the opportunity, try to take as many trips to different cities as possible. Definitely go to Lapland! And mainly just enjoy your time in Finland!

CONCLUSIONS

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

In the end I really had a great time in Helsinki. The education is good and Helsinki itself is also really nice. For a capital city it's not that big but that's also has its charm. And for the cold, it is really manageable and not that bad. I was in Helsinki in the spring period so I didn't really experience the dark period, but I did experience the light period and that was really awesome. Just take into account that you have to take half of your courses in social sciences, That was the only downside for me.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

If you get the chance to go on an exchange do it! I really had an awesome period abroad!



UU Report form - Erasmus 2015-2016

faculty/college	Sociale Wetenschappen/ Social Sciences
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	Psychologie/ Psychology

destination city & country	Helsinki, Finland
name university abroad	Universiteit van Helsinki/ Univeristy of Helsinki/ Yliopisto Helsingin
start date	26 / 08 / 2015 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	20 / 12 / 2015 (dd/mm/yyyy)

PREPARATION

exchange application process

It takes a lot of time and effort to understand exactly what you have to do and what is expected from you. In hindsight I probably should have started earlier, because the more you understand beforehand, the easier your exchange will be. During and after your exchange you will also have to make sure all documents are in order, so if you have prepared well enough from the start (when you actually have the time to do this!), you won't have to 'waste' precious time during your exchange on formalities.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

For me, the counselling and support could have definitely been better. There was still a lot of information that would have been very useful to know beforehand, for instance, how difficult it is to change your learning agreement. If you're dealing with a complex university system abroad, like me, it might be quite hard to find courses and therefore it might take you a while to arrange courses in such a way that they all match your interest, you have enough total credits, they don't overlap and they're all approved by the exam commission. Especially the last part hasn't got enough attention in my opinion. Bear in mind that you're going to be working with a completely different system and it takes time to fully understand it. To this day, it is still unclear to me if I made a mistake or that I didn't have any other choice, but neither my home university nor the university abroad were able to detect this 'mistake' and help me further. I ended up in the social sciences department, because in the Netherlands, psychology is part of this faculty. In Finland however, only social psychology is part of social sciences and since I was enrolled in this faculty I had to at least have 50% of my courses from this faculty. The exam commission in turn, thought many of my courses had too much overlap with the course social psychology in Utrecht! These kind of frustrating situations should be known to both the home university and the university abroad in my opinion, so in this field, there is room for improvement.

academic preparation

I didn't really prepare myself academically, because I had difficulties selecting courses, so I didn't know what to expect. In hindsight, if everything would've gone right, I wouldn't have prepared myself anyway, since if you do what you're told, everything is fairly straightforward.

language preparation

I myself didn't need any preparation, because my English level was good enough. If you are unsure about your English skills, you might want to take a course. It can also help to study a little Finnish already, if you're interested in learning the language, since it is quite hard. It is however not necessary, I passed my Finnish exam without prior knowledge of Finnish whatsoever.

finances



Make sure you have enough money saved, as Finland is a really expensive country and you'll most likely won't be able to work during your stay there. There are also lots of really nice places to visit (see later on), but they will all cost you lots of money. If you don't want to miss out on the optimal Erasmus experience, be wise and make sure you have your finances sorted out before you leave!

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)

It is quite hard to find courses as I mentioned before, so make sure you sign in for the courses on time, so you won't get rejected for courses you might really need or just find really interesting. In my opinion, the offer is quite limited, so keep this in mind. Furthermore, the university system is a bit chaotic, so it will take some time and effort to get everything in order.

academic quality of education activities

I attended some courses that were really well organized and very interesting and where you get to know your teacher on a more personal basis, which I always find pleasant. Some courses that have limited spots open for students are more likely to be a bit more intense in the sense of (group) discussion, homework and final examination or essay. I also attended some courses where the teacher didn't really pay that much attention to his/ her students and the workload is minimal. Usually these are the courses that don't have limits to the number of students who can participate. There is also a possibility to take an exam without participating in a course. You will have to discuss what the literature will be and you will get the date, time and place where you can take the exam. If you prefer self study, this is a really nice benefit!

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

The international officer was really nice and really wants to help, but in some cases it was hard to understand what was expected of me and she couldn't really give me a clear answer. Nonetheless, if I sent her an email, she always responded quickly and was very willing to help me out.

transfer of credits

It took some times for the grades and credits to be registered in the university system, but I believe if you really need them to be registered sooner, you can always send an email to the teacher and they can easily fix the problem for you. For me, it wasn't a problem, because I decided to have the transcript of credits sent to me after I returned home.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

The welcome fare is a really nice way of making sure you get all the important stuff done. Your tutors will show and tell you everything you need to know and you will have the most important things sorted in one day. It is quite a tiring day, since a lot of international students all have to do the same things at the same places, so you have to wait in line a lot. Nonetheless, at the end of the day, you will be happy you sorted it all in once.

accommodation

It was really hard to find a place in Helsinki, so start on time with your search! If you will get rejected for the HOAS housing, your options are limited. HOAS is the student housing organisation and they will offer you either one room, take it or leave it, or nothing at all. I believe most HOAS housing options are in big buildings with other international students.

leisure & culture

Typical Finnish is their love for the sauna, so most likely if you get a room offer from HOAS, you will have access to a sauna as well. I would definitely recommend joining ESN, because they organize fun events and have nice student discounts. Another initiative is the Buddy Group, where you can mix and mingle not only with



international students, but with Finnish people as well. You will most likely get an invitation through email where you will have to write a short motivation letter and will then they will let you know if you've been accepted. Helsinki is also a nice hub for travelling. Stockholm, Lapland, St. Petersburg and Tallinn are the favorite places to visit. Since alcohol is quite expensive, not only the Finns themselves, but a lot of the international students travel to Tallinn, Estonia, to buy cheaper alcohol. Helsinki nightlife offers some nice clubs and bars, but they are scattered over many areas, so you will have to see for yourself which places you like.

suggestions/tips

See leasure & culture :)

CONCLUSIONS

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

It depends on your interests. If you prefer a bit more quiet and small place with beautiful nature, this is the right place for you! If you prefer to party day and night, Helsinki is most likely not the best choice for you. The education was average in my opinion, so if you are looking for a combination of all of this stuff (you like a little peace and quiet every once in a while, but also want to party every now and then and besides your free time do want to study and learn, but don't expect the highest quality education), Helsinki just might suit you like a glove!

do you have any additional advice or comments?

That will be all!

University of Helsinki

2016-2017

PREPARATION
exchange application process
It did not take a lot of time. The instructions were very clear about what to do and when it had to be completed
counselling & support at Utrecht University
If I had questions about the application or anything else, an e-mail was sufficient to get all the information needed. The support and counselling at Utrecht University was helpful.
academic preparation
Was not needed. The level of education is more or less the same as in Utrecht.
language preparation
Not needed. Only a certain level of English was advised but no strict requirements
finances
I arranged an agreement with my parents about the costs of my Erasmus

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD
study programme (content and organisational issues)
In the months before your arrival, you get an insight in the courses that are offered by the University of Helsinki. By the time you get there, some might have changed due to circumstances. However, you can easily adjust your original study programme by selecting different courses
academic quality of education activities
The quality was overall sufficient but some courses were better than others.
counselling & support at receiving university abroad
Not really needed but when needed very helpful and quick to react when there were questions.
transfer of credits
Since Helsinki University also uses ECTS, all the ECTS will be transferred in principle. However some courses will not be on my final diploma, because some of my courses overlapped with courses from Utrecht.

STUDENT LIFE
welcome & orientation programme
Before arrival I got an email from my tutor who welcomed me and my group. She helped me when I arrived in Helsinki and showed us around the city and took care of us.
accommodation
I lived in shared apartment outside of the city. This was still doable because there was a train every 10 minutes or a bus going to the city centre
leisure & culture

Finnish culture differs from the Netherlands a bit since people tend to mind their own business and have a lot of respect for others and trust in each other. Other than this, I did not notice any differences since for the most part Dutch and Finnish society are mostly the same.

suggestions/tips

n.a.

CONCLUSIONS

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

Yes, I would because I have met a lot of people with different backgrounds in Helsinki. We had a big group of friends and did a lot of stuff together whereas most of the time you would just hang out with a handful of people. Helsinki is a really nice place to live because it is easy going and everything is well organised. The only thing you should be aware of is the fact that life in Finland is quite expensive so be prepared.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

Save some money before you go.

University of Helsinki

2016-2017

PREPARATION
exchange application process
Dit verliep allemaal heel soepel. De site van de UU is vrij uitgebreid en alle informatie was goed te vinden. Vervolgens nam de UU contact op met de Universiteit van Helsinki. Er moeten een aantal formulieren heen en weer worden gestuurd maar dit is allemaal niet zo heel veel werk.
counselling & support at Utrecht University
redelijk, ik vond het alleen vreemd dat in wat naar mijn idee voor iedereen de drukke periode was qua data waarin stukken naar gastuniversiteiten gestuurd moesten worden, international office twee weken dicht ging. v
academic preparation
Niet van toepassing, je academische kennis van Rechtsgeleerdheid is voldoende.
language preparation
Ook niet van toepassing, VWO engels was voldoende om naar de uni van Helsinki te gaan.
finances
Finland is wel vrij duur. Omdat ik al langer wist dat ik op exchange wilde gaan heb ik bijna een jaar kunnen

sparen. Het ligt er wel heel veel aan hoe duur je het zelf maakt. De gewone basisuitgaven zijn misschien een kleine 10 procent duurder maar alcohol is wel drie keer zo duur. Daar komt nog bij ik veel uit eten ben geweest en ik veel tripjes door scandinavie heb gemaakt. Dit is vooral wat een exchange duur maakt.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD
study programme (content and organisational issues)
De vakken waren wel leuk, vooral omdat het vaak vakken waren die je aan de UU gewoon niet kan volgen. Wel moet je er op letten dat het collegerooster voor een vak al vaststaat. Het is de bedoeling dat je zelf gaat kijken voordat je je inschrijft wat de tijden van college zijn. Ik heb uiteindelijk 4 vakken aan moeten passen op mijn learning agreement omdat ik die niet kon volgen qua tijden. Het is dus niet zo als op de UU dat je je inschrijft voor een vak, en dat je daarna een rooster met tijden krijgt. Het fijne hiervan was dan weer wel dat ik mij zo kon inschrijven dat ik de laatste twee weken van mijn exchange vrij was. Omdat ik al genoeg punten had gehaald in het eerste deel. Ook worden er vrijwel alleen maar hoorcolleges gegeven. Ik heb maar 1 vak gehad waar ik ook echt een tutorial had. Opvallend was ook dat ik geen een keer een boek heb moeten kopen. Ze boden alles online aan wat heel erg scheelde voor je portomonnee.
academic quality of education activities
Het was allemaal niet supermoeilijk. Het was vooral anders. In helsinki was het veel meer weten en veel minder toepassing zoals we dat vaak bij rechtenvakken op de UU hebben. Je moest wel echt studeren om een vak te halen maar dat was voor mij deels ook omdat alles in het Engels was..
counselling & support at receiving university abroad
Ze waren hier allemaal heel behulpzaam. Ze reageerde vaak dezelfde dag nog op e-mails en je kon ook vrijwel elke dag langsgaan. Gelukkig heb ik er zelf geen gebruik van hoeven maken.
transfer of credits

Vooralsnog heeft dit bij mij geen problemen opgeleverd. Let er vooral op dat een vak niet te veel lijkt op een vak dat je in Utrecht al gevolgd hebt. Dat is volgens mij de enige reden dat ze vakken uit Helsinki hebben afgewezen.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

Dit vond ik een van de sterke punten van de Universiteit van Helsinki. Je kreeg in augustus al een mentor aangewezen. Deze haalde in sommige gevallen zelfs op van het vliegveld en bracht je dan naar je accommodatie. Dit verschilde overigens wel per mentor. Mijn mentor heeft mij niet opgehaald. Het leuke van de mentor is dat het een tweedejaars rechtenstudent is die je alles laat zien. De JSVU van Helsinki heet PYKALA en zij organiseren veel voor exchange students. Je mentor neemt je hier ook constant mee naar toe. Daarnaast gaat je mentor het hele orientation programme met je mee. Eigenlijk doet de universiteit hier zelf vrij weinig, maar de mentoren willen letterlijk alles met je doen en elke vraag beantwoorden. Het idee van de mentor leek mij in eht begin vrij suf maar het zorgt dat je gelijk bevriend raakt met je mentorgroep en je je daardoor de eerste dagen niet verveeld. Ook leuk bij de finse studenten is dat ze allemaal heel erg aardig zijn tegenover exchange students. Dit is opvallend omdat over het algemeen de finnen eigenlijk helemaal niet sociaal zijn en nogal op zich zelf.

accommodation

Dit is wel heel ingewikkeld in Helsinki. De inschrijving voor huizen begonnen bij mij 1 april. Ik heb mij uiteindelijk eind april aangemeld maar dit was veel te laat. Als je geen huis krijgt wordt er vervolgens door de uni niks verder geregeld. Zorg dus dat je je in de eerste twee a drie dagen nadat de inschrijvingen voor huisvesting open

gaan aanmeld. Uiteindelijk vind wel iedereen een huis maar er zijn veel mensen die een maand in een hostel hebben gezeten. ik had uiteindelijk zelf een airbnb appartementje maar deze was wel heel prijzig. Zorg er ook voor dat je je aanmeld voor een single room bij Unihome. Als je hier op tijd bij bent dan krijg je een kamer in het Domus academica complex. Dit kost wel 600 eu per maan maar dat is voor de locatie echt perfect. Daarnaast was dit altijd de plek waar wij verzamelden voor alle sociale activiteiten met mijn vrienden. Perfect dus als je hier woont. Ondanks dat je dan een single room hebt zal je je hier nooit vervelen. Kamers wat meer buiten de stad kunnen wel wat goedkoper zijn, en ook nog steeds heel leuk. Maar het vervelende daar is dat dat altijd weer een gedoe was om 's nachts naar huis te komen. Ik zou dus echt iedereen domus aanraden.

leisure & culture

Helsinki als stad is niet heel bruisend. Daarom moet je echt dingen gaan ondernemen met je gemaakte vrienden. Nou hadden wij wel echt geluk met onze gigantische vriendengroep, en ik heb me dan ook zeker nooit verveeld. Zorg dat je naar musea gaat, cafetjes, uit eten en zoveel mogelijk tripjes maakt met je vrienden. Iedereen spreekt ook Engels dus ondanks dat je van Fins vaak helemaal niks kunt maken, kun je overal en met iedereen communiceren.

suggestions/tips

Voor goedkoper bier (€4) moet je naar de wijk Kallio. Hier zit ook een hele vette technoclub waar vaak grote namen draaien. Drank is wel overal zo duur dat je echt van te voren in moet drinken. Finnen drinken de meeste koffie per hoofd van de wereld. Er zijn dus heel veel leuke koffietentjes waar je vaak ook gratis refills krijgt. Daarnaast kan je goedkoop lunchen bij restaurants van de universiteit. Als restaurants zou ik zeker bar. no. 9 aan raden en skiffer errotoja. Dit zijn niet de lekkerste en niet te dure restaurants van Helsinki. Ga ook zeker naar het nationale park Nuuksio, tripjes voor goedkope alcohol naar Tallin(Estland), en sightseeing in Stockholm en Lapland. En zorg dat je de eertse dagen met alles mee doet. Je leert daardoor zoveel exchange studenten kennen dat je nooit meer zal vervelen.



CONCLUSIONS

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

Ik zou het zeker aanraden. het land is heel mooi en ondanks dat het wel echt west-europa was het wel een andere wereld. Alles is er goed geregeld, de stad is mooi (wel klein) er is voor ieder wat wils. Laat je ook niet afschrikken door de prijzen. Het hoeft helemaal niet duur te zijn.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

-



University of Helsinki

2016-2017

PREPARATION
exchange application process
I did not encounter any difficulties in the application process. The speed of response was very high.
counselling & support at Utrecht University
I felt like I could get help if necessary.
academic preparation
The level of the classes is quite low compared to Utrecht, I found.
language preparation
I started at C2 level, so no reason/need to prepare extra. I feel my speaking has improved.
finances
Helsinki is a rather pricey city to live in. I paid 414 monthly for my Hoas housing, but people living in the centre were paying (I believe) 550 /month for their apartments. Clubs, bars, coffeehouses, restaurants are all very expensive as well. Travelling around, however, did not set me back too much.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD
study programme (content and organisational issues)
Law at University of Helsinki. Mostly end of bachelor/master's courses.
academic quality of education activities
Much lower than in Utrecht. Papers and tests weren't very difficult to pass or even get a good grade in. Most lectures were not very good. Structure was fine. Time spent was much less than in Utrecht.
counselling & support at receiving university abroad
Very helpful.
transfer of credits
No comment

STUDENT LIFE
welcome & orientation programme
The orientation period is very well put together. I really liked how tutor groups were very active in the beginning: it was very easy to connect with people and make friends. All the information we got at the start also proved useful.
accommodation
I lived in HOAS housing in Pasila, one train stop away from central. It made it very quick and easy to get to any building in which law was taught.
leisure & culture
Helsinki has a lot of cool places to eat and go out. However, in terms of beauty, the city does not compare to, for instance, Copenhagen and Stockholm.



suggestions/tips

GO TO LAPLAND

St. Petersburg is also a must (I missed it, sadly)

You will take a trip/trips to Talinn, which is great

Stockholm is also a great idea, and if you have time/money, Copenhagen is really wonderful!

CONCLUSIONS

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

Not necessarily. It depends on what someone wants from their exchange. I myself was very pleased with the social life and opportunities I got from the start. Immediate connections with a lot of enthusiastic people looking to do interesting things. I also liked Finnish people and their mannerisms. Facilities are also generally very good, except for (in my experience) the healthcare services, where they did not speak English very well. On the other hand, the level of the courses was lower than i expected. I was not really challenged. The city itself also missed the charm of many other capitals in Europe, and was so expensive that it was a real hinderance in some situations.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

-



University of Helsinki

2016-2017

PREPARATION
exchange application process
The exchange application process took a lot of time. Luckily I started quite early to avoid stress and risks. I can recommend this, because you need a lot of stamps and signed forms.
counselling & support at Utrecht University
The International Office has been very helpful. They always reply very quick and they help you with everything. Also the information meetings and the clear instructions by e-mail were useful.
academic preparation
-
language preparation
I didn't have to do a language test. You only need to do this when you don't have the required level.
finances
I applied for an Erasmus grant and a retribution for my travel (OV) card at DUO.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD
study programme (content and organisational issues)
I was really keen about the Law courses, as there is a lot of choice and they are taught in English. However, when I arrived in Helsinki a lot of the courses were not available anymore. You should take this into consideration and be aware that the courses can be completely different.
academic quality of education activities
The study programm is completely different in comparison to University Utecht. Most of the courses are only 4 or 6 ECTS what means that you have to take more courses. Also there were nearly no seminars, but mostly lectures. In Utrecht is a strict attendance, but in Helsinki you can easily make an exam without any attendance and participation during the lectures. But there is such a big difference between the courses. Some of them are really hard and you really have to catch up with everything. Other courses are like a present. I think the quality of the University is very high. The teachers are very open minded and put a lot of effort in having debats, bring general issues in practice and are not only focussed on books and exams. The way of examining is also very different. You have to write more essays, lecture diaries and give presentations and moot courts, instead of a written exam. I really liked this way of teaching, because you really put everything you've learned in practice.
counselling & support at receiving university abroad
The contact persons are very helpful and friendly, both by e-mail and at the office.
transfer of credits
My transfer is not complete yet. I still have to receive some results.

STUDENT LIFE



welcome & orientation programme
In my opinion everthing was arranged very well. Everyone got a tutorgroup and I think this was really nice. You were directly in contact with people and there were already many activities. In the end of August there was a Welcome Fair and a introduction week of the faculty. It was organized very well for the exchange students, you felt immediatly home. Also the parties and activities were a large contribution to this.
accommodation
This caused a lot of stress. It is so difficult to find a normal accommodation for a reasonable price. I applied for an accomadation at Uni Home, but I did not get an offer. So I had to look for a room by myself. And this is almost impossible as it is either very far away or too expensive. In the end I found a room (8m2) for 550 eu in a hostel. I had my own bathroom and fridge and for 4 months it was ok.
leisure & culture
Helsinki itself is not a really big city. Unfortunately there is not that much going on during the winter months. There are not many sightseeing spots, but a lot of nice coffee places and restaurants. It is quite small what makes you feel really comfortable. I really liked Helsinki because it is so central regarding travelling. I've been to Tallin, several places in Finland, Lapland, Sint-Petersburg and Stockholm. Everything in Finland is really good organized what makes it easy and nice to undertake activitites. For example, together with some friends we rent a cottage in the lake district for the weekend.
suggestions/tips
Enjoy your time to the max and bring warm clothes.

CONCLUSIONS
would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain
Yes definitely. Because everything is so good organized, it's a very international city, everyone speaks English very well and there is a lot to do for international people and exchange students. Besides Helsinki University has been ranked very high in the world
do you have any additional advice or comments?
Be prepared that Helsinki is very expensive and that you can stand temperatures below zero.



University of Helsinki

2016-2017

preparation
exchange/placement application process
I prepared by looking at the placement options I liked and chose my top 3; marking the start of the exchange process.
counselling/support at home university
I didn't really need any counselling/support from UU – I just got all the needed documents signed and that was it.
academic preparation
I did not prepare academically.
language preparation
I did not do any language preparation.
Finances
I did not do any financial preparation since I had a savings account.
study/placement abroad period
study programme/work plan (concerning content and organisational issues)
<p>The courses at the University of Helsinki are very well organised. At the beginning of the semester it was a little confusing because you have to make your own schedule; this goes via an online platform called WebOodi. There you can pick and choose the courses you would like to follow. The confusing part is making sure your courses are not going to overlap with each other. You are completely free in doing this, no one is going to check your schedule. However, once you figure this out; it is pretty simple.</p> <p>The content of the courses I took were really good. My classes were very interesting and different from what I have taken before. I took around 50% law courses and 50% courses from other faculties because it was my 'vrije profileringsruimte'; I really enjoyed this because it gave me the opportunity to take e.g. social science courses instead of just law.</p>
academic quality of education/placement activities
The staff is very well qualified, all my professors were specialists in their field and really knew what they were talking about which made it a lot nicer to listen to them. The quality of the courses is very good too. However, this didn't mean they were more difficult; I spent less time on my studies in Helsinki but my grades here were higher than in Utrecht. This was good because I didn't want to spend all my free time on Erasmus studying.
counselling/support at host institution/organisation



The support at the university of Helsinki is really good. When you have an issue and email them about it, you are most likely to get a reply the same day. Also, the university in general is just very well organized.

transfer of credits

The 'examencommissie' has given me the green light on my courses but I have not gotten my transcript of records yet so I can't say much about this. I don't foresee any problems with the transfer of my credits though.

student life

welcome/orientation programme

When you arrive in Helsinki there is a three day welcome fair. Every exchange student gets a tutor group and a Finnish tutor. You will spend the first days with them – getting to know Helsinki, the university, the law student association (Pykala). These first days are really exhausting (parties) but also really fun because you will get to know all Law exchange students. It is also the time you will make your first friends. I really liked my tutor and my tutor group so I felt right at home after the welcome fair.

Accommodation

Make sure you sign in for an accommodation via UniHome because then the chance is really big you will get a room in Domus Academica. This is a huge apartment building with just exchange students; here you will have your own room with a kitchen and bathroom. The other housing organisation – Hoas – also has a lot of student accommodations; these are usually shared but are not as central as Domus. I subrented a Hoas apartment and lived with two other Finnish girls, which was nice. However, I preferred Domus so I was pretty much there all the time.

leisure/culture

I really enjoyed my free time in Helsinki. We had an amazing group of friends so we took a lot of trips (Stockholm, Lapland, St. Petersburg, Tallinn, Riga, Tampere, etc.), we had lunch together every day at the faculty cafeteria, we partied a lot together and just hung out a lot. Night life in Helsinki is expensive but also really fun, I had some really nice nights here.

Finnish people are pretty quiet and not so open so I didn't really befriend any of them. However, I didn't expect this so I wasn't disappointed.

The thing I enjoyed most about Finnish culture were the sauna's everywhere. I was told that there are even more saunas in Finland than cars. Every apartment has a sauna and it was something me and my friends did often. This is definitely something I will miss in Utrecht.

suggestions/tips

If you go to Helsinki (good choice!) you have to take a trip to Lapland. This was by far the most beautiful place I have ever seen!

Other tips are that you take into account that Scandinavia is expensive. In the grocery stores it is not that bad but expect to pay 6 euros for a beer in the club or a bar. I wouldn't let this hold me back though.



Also take into account that – in winter time – it gets pretty dark and cold. It didn't bother me so much (nearly not as much as I thought it would!). But if you can't stand it getting dark around 4 in December, Helsinki might not be the best option for you.

Conclusions

would you recommend this host organisation/destination to others? please explain

Yes! My Erasmus in Helsinki was amazing and the four months absolutely flew by. I made friends and memories for life and If I could do it again; I definitely would.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

Even though Helsinki wasn't my first choice, it was an amazing experience and I wouldn't trade it for the world.

University of Helsinki

2015-2016

PREPARATION
exchange application process
Ik ben vrij vroeg gestart met de voorbereidingen voor mijn uitwisseling. Na een voorlichting over studeren in het buitenland, georganiseerd door de Universiteit Utrecht, in oktober 2014 wist ik dat ik dit wilde gaan doen. In december ben ik begonnen met de voorbereidingen. Dit was veel werk, maar ik wilde het graag dus het was geen probleem. Ik had dingen uitgezocht over de universiteit waar ik wilde studeren, hoe ik dit zou bekostigen en of het al dan niet in mijn studieprogramma in Utrecht zou passen. Het is aan te raden om ruim op tijd met deze voorbereidingen te beginnen, je hebt namelijk stempels en handtekeningen van verschillende instanties nodig en deze zijn niet dagelijks geopend.
counselling & support at Utrecht University
Ik heb veel aan de Universiteit Utrecht gehad. Bij het international office kan je altijd naar binnen lopen als je vragen hebt. Toen eenmaal bekend werd dat ik was ingeloot voor de uitwisseling was er een informatieavond georganiseerd voor iedereen die op uitwisseling ging. Deze avond was zeer helpvol. Er werd duidelijk aangegeven wanneer je welke informatie op orde moet hebben en waar je dit naartoe moet sturen.
academic preparation
Ik heb academisch gezien niet heel veel voorbereid. Ik had gekeken in de course catalogue van mijn gast-universiteit, en ik had genoeg voorkennis over de vakken die ik ging volgen. Ik heb met name vakken met betrekking tot internationaal recht gevolgd, deze vakken vereisten wel enige voorkennis, maar dat had ik ook door de vakken die ik in Utrecht al gevolgd had. Deze inschatting bleek achteraf ook juist te zijn.
language preparation
Mijn Engels was niet van hoog niveau voordat ik naar Helsinki vertrok. Op de middelbare school was ik er nooit heel goed in, en tijdens mijn universitaire opleiding heb ik het alleen nog gehad in Engelstalige arresten. Als voorbereiding heb ik vier Engelse boeken gelezen in de zomer voordat ik vertrok naar Helsinki. Verder heb ik veel Engelse series en films gekeken met Engelse ondertiteling. Deze voorbereidingen bleken achteraf ruim voldoende te zijn, ik heb geen problemen gehad met Engels in Helsinki.
finances
Bij de financiële voorbereidingen is ook weer van groot belang dat je er op tijd mee begint. DUO en Erasmus hebben deadlines die belangrijk zijn om aan te houden. Ik heb spaargeld van mijzelf gebruikt, uitwonende studiefinanciering, OV-vergoeding, Erasmus-beurs en een bijdrage van mijn ouders. Dit was voldoende.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD
study programme (content and organisational issues)
Het studie programma in Helsinki is op een andere manier ingericht dan in Utrecht. De vakken zijn over het algemeen kleiner dan in Utrecht, de meeste vakken zijn tussen de 4 en 6 ECTS. Dit betekent dat je meer vakken volgt in een semester dan in Utrecht. Verder is het semester niet opgedeeld in twee duidelijke blokken. De vakken lopen door elkaar heen en het is een enorm gepuzzel om je rooster passend en zonder overlappingsen te maken. Dit kost even wat tijd en moeite, maar uiteindelijk is het goed te doen. Het is ook nog mogelijk om je in te schrijven voor vakken tijdens het semester.
academic quality of education activities
De kwaliteit van het onderwijs in Helsinki is - naar mijn mening - erg hoog. De meeste docenten werken naast hun baan als docent ook nog ergens anders, bijvoorbeeld bij de Verenigde Naties. Het onderwijs is merendeels in de vorm van hoorcolleges, maar er zijn ook vakken met werkgroepen. De examinering van de stof gaat ook op een andere manier. De tentamens zijn meer letterlijk dan in Utrecht, de antwoorden van de vragen zijn vaak

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letterlijk terug te vinden in het boek, wat in Utrecht meestal niet het geval is. Het is niet makkelijker vind ik, want je moet alles letterlijk uit je hoofd leren, het is een heel andere manier van studeren. Verder hebben niet alle vakken een tentamen, bij veel vakken moet je een essay schrijven of een learning diary. Persoonlijk vond ik ik deze afwisseling tussen tentamens en schrijfopdrachten erg fijn. Een ander groot verschil is dat niemand boeken koopt in Helsinki. Docenten plaatsen vaak wetenschappelijke artikelen of delen van boeken online die je moet voorbereiden voor de colleges. Sommige vakken gebruiken wel boeken, maar die moet je dan lenen in de bibliotheek.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

In Helsinki waren ze allemaal erg vriendelijk. De contactpersoon voor uitwisselingsstudenten had meerdere inloop gesprekken per week en was altijd bereikbaar per mail.

transfer of credits

De transfer van mijn credits is nog niet helemaal voltooid, want ik moet het resultaat van een tentamen nog terug krijgen. De resultaten staan allemaal heel overzichtelijk op WebOodi, en met een druk op de knop kun je je Transfer of Records laten opsturen naar huis. Dit is dus nog niet helemaal voltooid bij mij, maar ik vermoed dat dit geen problemen gaat opleveren.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

De universiteit van Helsinki organiseert een Welcome Fair voor uitwisselingsstudenten. Dit is erg handig en ik raad iedereen ook sterk aan om hier aan deel te nemen. Tijdens deze Welcome Fair kan je in een dag al je 'officiële' dingen regelen. Een pas voor de bibliotheek, lidmaatschap van ESN (aanrader!), lidmaatschap van de StudentUnion, een Sportpas, een e-mail en WebOodi account etc. Deze dag is veel in de rij staan maar het is echt de moeite waard, alles is dan geregeld in een dag.

accommodation

Mijn kamer heb ik geregeld via HOAS / Unihome. Dit ging vrij gemakkelijk. Je krijgt echter pas vrij laat het aanbod van je kamer te horen, dus als je lang niks te horen krijgt hoeft je je nog geen zorgen te maken. Ik woonde, samen met ongeveer 200 andere uitwisselingsstudenten, in Domus Academica. Dit is een groot complex in het centrum van Helsinki, in Kampi om precies te zijn. Kampi is een wijk in het centrum van Helsinki waar veel uitgaansgelegenheden zijn en op loopafstand van de universiteit en het bekende Senate Square. Als je een aanbod krijgt voor dit complex zou ik aanraden je niet af te laten schrikken door de prijs en het gewoon aannemen. Ik heb er altijd met erg veel plezier gewoond en de locatie is ideaal.

leisure & culture

In Helsinki zelf is erg veel te doen, het is een erg leuke stad om te winkelen en er zijn veel musea die interessant zijn om te bezoeken. Verder zijn er ontelbaar veel koffietentjes en restaurantjes die leuk zijn om te bezoeken. Daarnaast ligt Helsinki redelijk centraal, en zijn er veel leuke uitstapjes die je kunt doen vaaf Helsinki. Echte aanraders zijn Nuksio National Park (een uurtje met de bus), het traditionele stadje Porvoo (wederom een uurtje met de bus), de boottrip naar Sint-Petersburg - Rusland - en een trip naar Lapland. Zelf ben ik naar Sint-Petersburg en Lapland geweest met Timetravels, dit was zeer goed bevallen, het is helemaal nie duurder dan wanneer je alles zelf regelt denk ik. Daarnaast is vooral Lapland erg lastig om zelf te regelen, omdat je voor alle activiteiten een auto nodig hebt om er te komen.

suggestions/tips

Mijn grootste tip is om te genieten van je tijd daar, en vooral zo veel mogelijk uitstapjes te ondernemen. Het hoeft niet allemaal duur te zijn, maar je zit er maar een keer en het is zonde om daar dan niet maximaal van te genieten.

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CONCLUSIONS

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

Ik zou de Universiteit van Helsinki zeker aanraden aan anderen. Ten eerste omdat de universiteit zelf erg goed is. Ze geven je veel ruimte om zelf na te denken wat je van bepaalde onderwerpen vindt en een gefundeerde mening te creëren. Colleges bestaan vaak uit discussiëren en debateren. Daarnaast is de stad Helsinki zelf geweldig. Het is geen enorme stad, naar mijn idee was het zelfs kleiner dan Utrecht, maar er is meer dan genoeg te doen. Het is echt een levende stad en ik voelde me er al heel snel thuis, wat toch erg fijn is wanneer je ergens woont voor een (half) jaar.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

Mijn advies is om ruim op tijd te beginnen met de voorbereidingen voor je uitwisseling. Zo voorkom je een hoop gestress en het is fijn om voorbereid te zijn op wat er komen gaat. Daarnaast is mijn advies voor als je er eenmaal bent om volop te genieten, want voor je het weet is je semester alweer voorbij gevlogen!

2012-2013

preparation

exchange/placement application process

I applied in the beginning of January for my exchange

counselling/support at home university

I received clear instructions by e-mail and through a special meeting about what to do

academic preparation

Nothing special

language preparation

Nothing special

finances

I applied for an Erasmus grant and a retribution for the OV-card at DUO

study/placement abroad period

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

For law, there were enough courses in English to choose from, but for any other field I would recommend checking if there are enough courses that you are interested in taught in English. I have heard a lot of people complain about this.

academic quality of education/placement activities

The way of teaching was very different compared to what I was used to at UU. There were mostly lectures and not as many active participation. This differs according to the

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course, though. Compared to UU there were a lot of classes to attend, but (on the whole) there wasn't so much work you needed to do on your own (papers, reading books etc). I got quite some 'easy credits'.

counselling/support at host institution/organisation

There was a mailing list for law exchange students by which I got very regularly informed about how to get things done.

transfer of credits

i think it will be alright, but i don't know yet.

student life

welcome/orientation programme

There was a welcome fair in August and a faculty introduction afterwards.

accommodation

I applied for accommodation at HOAS as soon as I was accepted. I highly recommend this, as there is a shortage of student accommodations and renting private can get very expensive. I got a room that was fairly big (17m²) with private kitchen and bathroom and a 20min walk from the university, which was really nice. And important, there was a sauna in the building which was free of charge.

leisure/culture

There is a gym called UniSport where you can sport and attend classes unlimitedly for a bargain. There are a lot of saunas all over town, you should at least try when you're living in the Sauna-country. Make sure to visit Kuusijärvi, a smoke sauna at the lake side at about 20 min busdrive from the central railway station. Also, there are a lot of nice bars and clubs in Helsinki, e.g. Navy Jerry's and Tiger.

suggestions/tips

conclusions

would you recommend this host organisation/destination to others? please explain

If you can't stand temperatures below zero, than no. Otherwise, yes definitely. The uni has great facilities, the city is perfect for living, the university's information is clear and it is a great place for visits to Lapland and Russia.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

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2009-2010

Vorbereiding

Ik ben erg internationaal opgevoed. Op een uitwisseling gaan is voor mij dus altijd een MUST geweest. Scandinavië trok me altijd wel aan: net als iedereen had ik van de Northern Lights, de grote bossen en de meters sneeuw gehoord. Maar teveel stilte en ruimte om me heen wilde ik ook niet. Alle kleine universiteiten in het noorden van Finland en Noorwegen vielen dus af. Helsinki, voor haar mooie vakkenaanbod, haar positie in het midden van Scandinavië, en voor het feit dat het een hoofdstad was, trok me erg aan. De universiteit van Uppsala (Zweden) had ik als tweede keus staan. De aanmelding viel heel erg mee: een motivatiebrief schrijven, een paar formulieren invullen, en op gesprek komen. En ik kon naar Helsinki.

Hiervoor moest ik mijn studieplanning drastisch aanpassen. De lessen begonnen in Helsinki op 8 januari, terwijl het tweede blok in Utrecht tot begin februari liep. Ik heb er zelf voor gekozen om in het tweede blok zeven weken stage te lopen en vervolgens een halfjaar vertraging op te lopen.

Finse lessen heb ik voor mijn vertrek niet gevolgd. De universiteit van Helsinki bood genoeg lessen in het Engels aan, en ik heb genoeg ervaring met talen om te weten dat mijn Fins onvoldoende zou zijn om lessen te volgen. Ook achteraf (in Helsinki) heb ik geen Finse lessen gevolgd. Fins is een lastige taal die nergens op lijkt en dus heel moeilijk te leren. Vrienden die Finse les gevolgd hebben konden het na vijf maanden nog steeds amper. Wel heb ik de LEAP gedaan. Ik heb het als derde vak gevolgd. Als je goed georganiseerd bent en bij voorbaat al goed Engels kan, is het prima als derde vak te doen. De LEAP is alleen gebaseerd op het common law systeem en was dus niet erg nuttig voor een uitwisseling in Finland.

Een kamer vinden ging erg makkelijk. Ik had me bij HOAS, de vereniging die in Helsinki voor kamers zorgt, ingeschreven. Ik kreeg een kamer op 5 km afstand van het centrum. HOAS had wel een aantal nadelen: de kamers waren duur en klein, en ik kreeg pas twee weken voor mijn vertrek een bericht dat ik een kamer had. Hierbij hadden zij niet genoeg kamers voor iedereen. Ook de aankomst in Helsinki was goed geregeld. Twee maanden voor aankomst konden wij ons voor een pick-up service inschrijven. Hierbij werden we van het vliegveld opgehaald en naar onze kamer gebracht.

Studie

We konden ons niet voor aankomst in Helsinki voor vakken inschrijven. Maar omdat ik in het tweede semester op uitwisseling ging, hadden de (uitwisselings)studenten die het hele jaar in Helsinki waren, zich al ingeschreven voor de eerste vakken en zo alle plaatsen al in beslag genomen. Het inschrijven voor de eerste vakken van het semester was dus slecht geregeld. De lessen zelf waren erg goed. We hadden veel meer contacturen dan in Nederland. Het onderwijs was vaak ook veel kleinschaliger. Hierdoor werden wij veel meer beoordeeld op essays, mondelinge presentaties, debatten...

Terwijl het in Nederland de bedoeling is om theorieën te leren (en soms weer toe te passen op een casus), moesten we daar veel meer zelf een mening over een onderwerp scheppen en deze beargumenteren.

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Studentenleven

Het semester begon met een nuttige Orientation course. Hier werd belangrijke informatie gegeven, over de studies, maar ook over het (studenten)leven in Helsinki. De informatie betrof zaken zoals het openbaar vervoer, sporten of de studentenverenigingen.

Helsinki zit heel centraal in het noorden van Europa en ik heb dan ook mijn kans gegrepen om te reizen. Ik heb aan reizen in Lapland en in Rusland (Moskou en Sint-Petersburg) deelgenomen. Deze werden door ESN, de vereniging voor uitwisselingsstudenten, georganiseerd. Ook heb ik zelf reizen naar Stockholm, Tallinn en Riga gepland. Helsinki ligt centraal in Scandinavië en deze reizen waren ook eenvoudig en redelijk goedkoop in elkaar te zetten.

Finnen ontmoeten was moeilijker dan verwacht: de meeste lessen deed ik met andere uitwisselingsstudenten, dit omdat slechts weinig Finnen lessen in het Engels volgden. Mijn Duitse lessen en karatelessen volgde ik met Finnen. Hierdoor heb ik een aantal Finnen ontmoet. Ook bij het uitgaan heb ik de lokale bewoners ontmoet. Finnen zijn wat meer verlegen dan wat wij in Nederland gewend zijn en durven vaak pas een gesprek met een onbekende na een paar glazen bier te beginnen. Ook blijven ze lang erg afstandelijk.

Conclusie

Mijn uitwisseling zat vol met nieuwe ervaringen. Ten eerste moest ik zelf weer mijn leven op voet zetten in een onbekend land met onbekende mensen, en daar mijn weg leren vinden. Ten tweede heb ik veel nieuwe mensen leren kennen, van verschillende culturen, en hier veel van geleerd.

Maar naast deze nieuwe ervaring heb ik een ontzettend leuke tijd gehad. Vlak voormijn uitwisseling twijfelde ik of ik nog wilde gaan. Maar spijt heb ik er zeker niet van gehad.

University of Helsinki

2009-2010

preparation
exchange/placement application process
I applied for the exchange program through my home institution. My co-ordinator helped me with the application forms. It was not so hard to apply for the exchange. There were several forms that I had to fill in, but it was not very difficult and it did not take too much time as I had expected before I applied.
counselling/support at home university
The home university helped me with the application process and I could ask all the questions I had about the exchange.
academic preparation
I looked up on the website of the University of Helsinki which kind of courses there would be given. I chose some courses, but in the end the courses were different than written on the internet.
language preparation
I did not have any language preparation. The language that I had to speak was English, I already knew how to speak English and write English, so I did not make any effort to practice English before I went to Finland.
finances
I applied for the Erasmus grant, and I worked before to have some savings. I asked my parents to help me paying everything.
study/placement abroad period
study programme/work plan (concerning content and organisational issues)
Before I went to Finland, I had the courses in my mind that I wanted to take. In the end, the courses changed a lot. It was difficult to find good courses, because there were a lot I already followed in the Netherlands and the creditsystem is different in Helsinki than in Utrecht. I ended up with following very interesting courses. The courses were not only focused on the law, but they were also focused on the society, different cultures and critique of law. The university of Helsinki wrote all the time emails about new courses. This was a bit confusing. The organization of the courses, in the way the courses were given, was very different from the University of Utrecht. There were different kind of courses, practical courses or lecture courses. This aspect I liked and did not like. There were no small groups where you had to make assignments, this way you could not learn how to apply the law to cases. The practical courses were very nice, if something is practical you learn much more than when you only listen to a lecturer.
academic quality of education/placement activities
The academic quality of the education was very high. The University of Helsinki is very high on the ranking lists of Universities around Europe, and this is correct. The teachers had good knowledge and some were very good in explaining. Not every teacher was as good as possible, but overall the academic quality was high.
counselling/support at host institution/organisation
The counseling of the host institution was not good. I did not ask a lot of questions, because I did not need to. But when I went to the co-ordinator of my faculty, she did not answer my questions politely and I felt that I had to leave as soon as possible because I wasted her time.
transfer of credits
The credits in Helsinki are also ECTS, just like in Utrecht. The transfer of the credits goes very easy this way.
student life
welcome/orientation programme
The orientation programme on the first days, started the second day that I was in Helsinki. This was very tiring. There was an orientation course with all the exchange students. We had to listen to a lot of information and we had to do a lot of things. This was a bit overwhelming. But, my tutor (a student) led our group to all the things that we had to do. This way the things we had to do were done very easily. The faculty of Law

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had a warm welcome, on the second day we had a reception to welcome all of us.

accommodation

I applied for accomodation very soon, and I got a single room. Firstly I wanted to live with other roommates, but I got a small appartment for myself. This was in the in the end very good. I had my own bathroom, my own kitchen, everything for my own. The accomodation was very good. The only thing I did not liked about my room is that it was far from the city centre. HOAS, the organization that worked together with the University to give foreign students a house, was a good organization.

leisure/culture

In the 4 months I was in Helsinki, I joined the International Evangelical Church. I had a bible study there where I met a lot of friends. We did a lot of things together. I went to ice-sakting, ballet different cafés. Helsinki has a lot to offer to enjoy the leisure.

suggestions/tips

If someone goes to Helsinki to study, he or she must enjoy the saunas! And the beautifull nature all around Finland.

conclusions

would you recommend this host organisation/destination to others? please explain

I would recommend the University of Helsinki to others. The University has a lot of courses for Exchange students, and the level of the courses are high and good. The system of the study is different from the Netherlands, but because Helsinki is in Europe, it is easy to adapt to the way of teaching.

do you have any additional advice or comments?