



## ERASMUS+ STUDIES - UU Report

faculty/college	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	Riga, Latvia
name university abroad	University of Latvia
start date	03 / 09 / 2018 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	25 / 01 / 2019 (dd/mm/yyyy)

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

<b>PREPARATION</b>	
exchange application process	The application was easy and overall clear. Sometimes you have to search for the right information but all forms and deadlines can be found on the website of UU and the international office is available for questions.
counselling & support at Utrecht University	All questions I had were answered by the international office and they helped me out when needed. Most of the times they answered quickly and at before departure there is a meeting.
academic preparation	I did not prepare anything for the courses that I was going to take. I expected the the academical level in Latvia to be lower than in the Netherlands and I took mostly introduction courses.
language preparation	All courses I took were in English. I had to show language proficiency which I had so there was no need for other preparation, there were language classes available in Latvian and Russian if needed.
finances	I calculated the amount of money I expected to need for my exchange. Latvia is cheap, especially groceries and restaurants. Also the rent was much lower than in the Netherlands.

<b>STUDY ABROAD PERIOD</b>	
study programme (content and organisational issues)	It is possible to follow courses at all faculties. The course offer however was not very accurate as many courses that I planned to take were eventually cancelled, and new ones were made available. I had to change my learning agreement several times. What I did like was the opportunity to try out some courses to see if you like them, you could decide to not register and choose something else in the first two weeks.
academic quality of education activities	The academic quality is lower than in Utrecht. Some professors could not speak English very well and for some courses I did not even follow classes. We just had to read and write two papers.



The courses were either 6 ECTS or 3 ECTS so i had to follow more courses at the same time to get enough creditpoints

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

The international office in Riga was very helpful and they were always happy to answer questions and to help if there were any problems occurring. Teachers do not always answer emails.

transfer of credits

1 latvian creditpoint equals 1,5 ECTS. The courses are either 6 or 3 ECTS and can be transferred.You have to check if the level of courses is high enough to be able to transfer the courses for your degree

## STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

There is not really an orientation program offered by the university. ESN organises a welcome week with many activities however, which was really nice to meet other students and get to know the city.

accommodation

The university offers rooms in dormitories iut of the city centre. I chose to look for a room myself and found one via facebook. Most of the people i know found their room this way, there are several groups where people offer a room. Riga offers enough cheap accomodations so it is easy to find a room in the city centre.

leisure & culture

Riga has a central location and it is easy to travel to neighbour countries like Estonia, Lithuania, Russia and also Scandinavia. By bus it is really cheap to go to Vilnius and Tallinn Riga itself is a nice and cozy city, at least the old city centre. It is not very big and transportation is very good and cheap. There are a lot of bars and restaurants. A lot of new and modern places open there.

In summer I took the train to the beach which is onky about 35 minutes. In autumn it is very nice to see the national park in Sigulda. Latvian people seem to be a little introverted and they do not smile very often. Once you get to know them, they are friendly.

This year Latvia celebrated the 100<sup>th</sup> year of independence with an amazing fireworks show. Latvians have a lot of national days that they celebrate in a big way.

suggestions/tips

Go to ALA restaurant

## CONCLUSIONS

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

For the academic quality I would not recommend the University of Latvia. The destination is very nice, the Erasmus group is small compared to other destinations which makes it easy to meet and get to know the group.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

don't stress to much about the changes in courses you plan to attend because I found that the universuty is very flexible, there is enough time to figure everything out.



## ERASMUS+ STUDIES UU Report

family name	
first name	
student number	
e-mail address	<i>optional; only if you don't mind students preparing for study abroad contacting you directly</i> Contact info available at the IO.
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	Pedagogical Sciences

destination city & country	Riga, Latvia
name university abroad	University of Latvia
start date	02 / 09 / 2016 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	04 / 01 / 2017 (dd/mm/yyyy)

<b>PREPARATION</b>	
exchange application process	
	Het exchange application process betreft het proces van de Universiteit Utrecht. Er is een overzicht met wat er ingeleverd moet worden hiervoor en dit was voor mij vrij duidelijk.
counselling & support at Utrecht University	
	Mijn ervaring is dat je veel zelf moet regelen en achter dingen aan moet gaan. Er is bijvoorbeeld wel een voorbereidingsbijeenkomst, maar dit is vrij ver van tevoren en ik was op dit moment nog niet zoveel ermee bezig. Als je hulp vraagt, word je wel goed geholpen door het International Office.
academic preparation	
	Ik heb mij niet op de studie daar voorbereid en dit was ook niet nodig.
language preparation	
	Van tevoren heb ik niet specifiek mijn Engels voor mijn Erasmus geoefend. Ook heb ik geen Letse taalcursus gedaan.
finances	



Bij de aanmelding moet je een begroting inleveren. Op mijn begroting werd het duidelijk dat het voor mij niet echt nodig was extra geld te sparen voor mijn Exchange. Veel kosten zullen hetzelfde zijn, zoals kamerhuur en je hebt extra inkomstbronnen zoals Erasmus beurs. Het geld dat ik tijdens mijn Erasmus meer uitgaf, zat vooral in leuke dingen doen zoals tripjes naar andere steden.

## STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

### study programme (content and organisational issues)

Ik had ervoor gekozen om psychologie vakken in Riga te gaan volgen. Erg belangrijk om hierbij op te letten is deze vakken allemaal zelfstudie is. Dat houdt in dat je voor deze vakken geen colleges hebt, maar zelf thuis moet studeren en dan af en toe een toets moet maken op de universiteit. Voor een aantal andere psychologie vakken die ik volgde, had ik alleen schrijftaken. Ik vond de vakken wel interessant, maar het niveau van deze vakken lag een stuk lager dan aan de UU. Voor het volgen van vakken op een ander studiegebied waren er wel gewoon colleges.

Qua organisatie was de studie in Riga vaak erg chaotisch. Mijn ervaring is dat het lastig is om docenten te bereiken, veel toetsen en bijeenkomsten worden verplaatst en er onduidelijkheid is over wat de leerstof is. Dit heb ik wel als vervelend ervaren. Ik wist vaak niet zo goed waar ik aan toe was.

### academic quality of education activities

De kwaliteit vond ik laag, maar het verschilde wel per vak. Over het algemeen werd er veel minder van mij verwacht dan aan de Universiteit Utrecht.

### counselling & support at receiving university abroad

De coördinator van de University of Latvia was erg vriendelijk en behulpzaam. Verder kon ik van de docenten weinig steun verwachten.

### transfer of credits

Het aantal ECTS staat aangegeven bij het vak dat je wilt volgen in Letland.

## STUDENT LIFE

### welcome & orientation programme

De eerste dag was er een introductiedag op de universiteit. Op deze dag werd veel informatie gegeven. Over de vakken die je kon volgen, maar bijvoorbeeld ook over het letse volk en komende activiteiten. Er was op deze dag niet echt ruimte voor kennismaking met andere internationale studenten. De ESN (Erasmus Student Network) van Riga had wel introductie activiteiten gepland, zoals kanoën.

### accommodation

De University of Latvia heeft student dorms waar je in kunt. Ik heb hier veel wisselende reacties over gehoord. Vaak deel je hier een kamer met één of meerdere andere Erasmus studenten. Je woont hier meestal met veel mensen op een gang, hebt een vrij kleine kamer en moet met veel mensen een keuken en badkamer delen. Er is dus weinig ruimte voor jezelf. Het is wel erg goedkoop om hier te wonen. Deze dorms liggen ongeveer op een kwartier afstand van het centrum met de bus. Het is niet echt een fijne wijk om te zijn. Er zijn echter ook individuele kamers beschikbaar in dit complex, maar dat zijn er niet veel.

Daarnaast is er de mogelijkheid zelf op zoek te gaan naar een kamer. Dit heb ik ook gedaan. Sommige studenten gaan eerst in Riga in een hostel zitten en dan vanuit daar zoeken. De studenten die dit hebben gedaan en ik heb gesproken, hebben allemaal wat gevonden. Alleen het kan wel veel stress opleveren. Ik heb vantevoren gezocht en via een Facebook pagina een kamer gevonden. Door zelf een kamer te zoeken, zit je vaak dichterbij het centrum dan de dorms. Daarnaast is ook dit voor utrechse begrippen goedkoop.



## leisure &amp; culture

## Vrije tijd

Door de vakken die ik volgde had ik veel vrije tijd. Mijn ervaring is dat andere Erasmus studenten dat ook hadden. Hierdoor werden er veel leuke dingen gedaan, zoals samen uiteten of op stap. Ik ging vrij vaak 's avonds de stad in om een drankje te doen. Dit was dan ook erg betaalbaar in Letland.

## Cultuur

Hoe ik het heb ervaren, komen erasmus studenten weinig in aanraking met de letse bevolking. Er zijn vrij veel musea en andere bezienswaardigheden in Riga.

## suggestions/tips

**CONCLUSIONS**

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

Ik raad Riga aan als bestemming. Ik heb een hele leuke tijd gehad in Riga. Ook andere Erasmus studenten heb ik erg positief gehoord over hun exchange periode in Riga. Riga is een bestemming waar je misschien anders niet zo snel komt, waar de ligging ervan een goede gelegenheid biedt om trips te maken (zoals naar St. Petersburg), het is betaalbaar, een andere cultuur en een internationale stad. Maar het nadeel vond ik wel dat het studeren in Riga erg chaotisch was en niet erg leerzaam. Als je hier veel waarde aan hecht, zou ik voor een andere bestemming kiezen.

## do you have any additional advice or comments?



## ERASMUS+ STUDIES

### UU Report 2015-2016

e-mail address	<i>optional; only if you don't mind students preparing for study abroad contacting you directly</i> Contact info available at the IO.
faculty/college	Social sciences
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	Cultural anthropology and development sociology

destination city & country	Riga, Latvia
name university abroad	University of Latvia
start date	31 / 08 / 2015 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	29 / 01 / 2016 (dd/mm/yyyy)

#### PREPARATION

##### exchange application process

Overall it was fine. It does require a lot of waiting, and it can take a long time before you figure out where to find what information, to who you should send your forms and what the deadlines are, but if you go to the link <http://students.uu.nl/en/academics/study-abroad/step-1-orientation/costs-and-funding/erasmus-grants#studies>, go to step 5 and download "timeline and instructions" you should be okay. I found this document when I already left, and it would have answered a lot of my questions if I had known of its existence before.

##### counselling & support at Utrecht University

As I already said, it can require some waiting. Best is to call the university or stop by, the university can be helpful then, but with e-mail it did take longer to have my questions answered (what when you're abroad can sometimes be a bit tricky).

##### academic preparation

I didn't have to prepare anything, but of course it is useful to figure out what courses the university offers so you can prepare yourself for that.

##### language preparation

For me it wasn't necessary to do any language preparation.

##### finances

It is good to make a plan before you leave, because it does cost money of course. The cost of living in Latvia tends to be lower than in the Netherlands, especially - compared to Utrecht - the prices for a room. But since you are going abroad you will meet a lot of people, and therefore it is likely that you will be doing a lot of things outside of your house like having dinner or drinks, go to an icehockey match or travel to surrounding countries (in my case Estonia, Lithuania and Finland). So it is good to take these things into account when you're making a financial plan.

#### STUDY ABROAD PERIOD



study programme (content and organisational issues)
They had a lot of courses that are different from the offer at UU, so it was interesting to do something completely different like learning Russian or how to make a documentary. On the other hand, the one course that I found really useful for my study got canceled since there were not enough people who signed up for it. In my first week I received a paper with a schedule for all the courses, and I had to figure out what would fit for me. This meant that some of the courses I planned to do were overlapping, but luckily enough there were plenty of other courses.
academic quality of education activities
The courses were for me of a lower level than expected. Maybe this also had to do with the fact that they were not for 7.5 ECTS but only 6 ECTS (or 3 ECTS for the short ones). I think it is also because the courses were especially for Erasmus students, not everyone speaks English at the same level and a lot of people like to have the opportunity to travel around the surrounding countries, and the teachers support that as well, most of them want you to explore the country, meet other students and want you to take your time for that.
counselling & support at receiving university abroad
It was really great, whenever I had a question I could just stop by at the office because they were almost always there and my emails were most of the time answered within a day, they were really helpful and always happy to help you, they would even give you extra advice etc.
transfer of credits
They have different credits in Latvia, which means that 1 credit in Latvia is equal to 1,5 ECTS.

<b>STUDENT LIFE</b>	
welcome & orientation programme	
The university offered an introduction meeting which was really helpful, and next to that there was the ESN organisation which in the first week had events everyday where you could meet other students.	
accommodation	
As I already said, the price for a room in Riga is a lot cheaper than in Utrecht. It depends where you live though. The dormitories are especially cheap, but there you probably have to share a room and the dormitories are not in the center. I found myself a really nice apartment while searching on facebook (there were several Erasmus groups) for roommates. This is how most of the people found their accomodation. Other people arrived a week earlier and searched from there on, but I would recommend to start searching before you leave because that saves you a lot of stress (and when you arrive you'll probably meet new people immediately so you wouldn't want to be bothered with meetings for an apartment).	
leisure & culture	
The ESN organisation organises a lot of things, from language farms to halloween parties and trips to surrounding countries. I myself visited Lithuania and Estonia by myself, because that was really easy to organise, but I did choose to go with ESN to Lapland, since they also got discounts. Some people always go to every ESN event, some people don't. I myself went there the first week to meet people, and soon enough I found myself surrounded with awesome people, so afterwards I didn't really join the organisation anymore because I was too busy with other things. I really recommend to just explore the country, it is beautiful. And for Riga as it is a big city, there is always something to do, there are plenty of festivals, cheap bars, concerts, food in the restaurants is really affordable. It was really nice to see that Riga is a bit more upcoming city, so a lot of things only opened recently and there is something nice to do for everyone. I myself really enjoyed my time in a punk bar just around the corner of my house, while other people preferred to go to some nightclubs, so you can really decide for yourself what you	



want to do there, because everything is there.

suggestions/tips

As I said already, explore the country, the city and surrounding countries! Especially Lapland was almost a lifechanging experience.

## CONCLUSIONS

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

Definitely! Riga is beautiful, the architecture is amazing and if you stay there in the winter you have some chance to experience the real cold (-20 degrees and the Daugava river completely frozen). The teachers at the university are really friendly and all want you to have nice stay in Latvia. I did bachelor courses here, and I found that the level was a lot lower than expected, so if you really want to improve on an academical level it could be better to do some master courses.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

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## ERASMUS+ STUDIES

### UU Report 2015-2016

e-mail address	<i>optional; only if you don't mind students preparing for study abroad contacting you directly</i> Contact info available at the IO.
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	Pedagogische Wetenschappen

destination city & country	Riga, Latvia
name university abroad	University of Latvia
start date	30 / 08 / 2015 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	30 / 01 / 2016 (dd/mm/yyyy)

#### PREPARATION

##### exchange application process

You just have to upload some documents (ID, transcript of records, english language proficiency) and you have to select some courses. For me it didn't work at first, I emailed the coordinator and my experience was that she helped me really good and fast.

##### counselling & support at Utrecht University

I didn't ask so much help because everything was clear. But when I did, I received good help. Even in the holiday period.

##### academic preparation

In my opinion it is easy to succeed the academic level in Latvia if you can in Utrecht.

##### language preparation

You need to show you have a B2 level of english. I asked the international office for the english language proficiency, because if you study at a dutch university you definitely have this level of english.

##### finances

Overall, Latvia is cheap. products in the supermarkets have the same price, but restaurants and the markets are cheaper. But, if you rent a flat for just 5 months it's not really cheap (I paid 270 a month). For the erasmus grant, Latvia is a 'cheap' country, so the grant isn't that high.

#### STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

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

You can attend courses from each faculty. You also can 'try' the courses during the first month. If you don't like it after 1 or 2 lectures, you can decide to not register and find something else. It is really flexible and in my opinion they offer enough in english.

##### academic quality of education activities

The classes were all really small and lectures were long. The level wasn't high, but you need to do 'more' for your credits than in Utrecht. For example, a really long paper. But on the other side, the level is lower so it's



easier.
counselling & support at receiving university abroad
really helpful. always fast and nice people
transfer of credits
I don't know yet. They sent the transcript of records in time to UU.

<b>STUDENT LIFE</b>
welcome & orientation programme
There was a welcome week from ESN with activities and opportunities to get to know the other students. This was a really nice week. The university doesn't really offer a orientation programme. There was just one meeting, with all erasmus students. But this was more like a lecture where they gave information about Riga and the university.
accommodation
The university 'offers' accommodation in 2 dormitories. I won't recommend them. I haven't been there actually, but I know the neighborhood is 'bad' and far away from the city center. One advantage is that it's cheap if you share a room. But you have to ask yourself if you really want that for 4 or 5 months... I found a shared flat in the city center via a FB group. I would recommend to search for a shared flat. All my friends in Riga lived in shared flats and in my opinion this is really nice. Most of them are really big and nice, good locations, if you're lucky your flatmates are nice (at least, usually you can select them yourself) and in my opinion the meetings and partys in flats are the best ones. I know also a lot of people who didn't get a flat before they were coming. They stayed in a hostel the first week(s) and searched for a flat here. This is also possible, there are enough flats. It is not as hard as in Utrecht.
leisure & culture
The location of Riga is perfect to travel. It's really cheap to go to Lithuania and Estonia (by bus it's possible to have a roundtrip for 10 euros or cheaper if you're lucky). You can also go by ferry to Stockholm. I've also been to Poland, Lapland and St. Petersburg. Also in Latvia it's nice to discover places, particulary national parks. Traveling by train is extremely cheap. I've been to the beach many times and saw some national parks during the autumn. In Riga is also a lot to do. The Old Town is really nice, small and cosy. Has a lot of nice bars and restaurants. There are some nice clubs out of the centre. Visiting a ballet show in the national opera is really cheap and I also really liked visiting an ice hockey game. And of course, the cinema, museums, ice skating, etc... The culture is not really shocking, but sometimes it is just funny. You have to know the Latvians before they are nice. They usually never smile and that was really strange in the beginning. But they are all really proud of their country and the independence. They have a lot of national days with tradition celebration and they take this seriously. This is really special, it was like whole Latvia came to Riga to listen to the traditional music and to light candals.
suggestions/tips

<b>CONCLUSIONS</b>
would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain
I would definitely recommend Riga and University of Latvia to others. Riga is a pretty unknown destination, but



it is a really cool city. It is small and also the erasmus group is not really big. This makes it very friendly and you really have the opportunity to get to know a lot of people, everyone knows each other. For me it was really like one big erasmus family.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

Keep in mind that you probably can't attend all the courses you planned. For me, there were many changes in time. This made it impossible to attend everything. But it is possible to attend courses of all faculties, so there is enough choice.

Looking to the dates of the period (for me it was the autumn semester) it looks like the semester is till the end of January. They call January the exam period. But for me, all the professors tried to finish the course in December. In most courses there were mainly Erasmus students. So I think that if you want to go back at Christmas already, it is also possible. The professors are all really flexible and if you want to make an exam in December instead of January, this should be possible. So you don't 'have to' stay just for one exam.