



## ERASMUS+ STUDIES UU Report

Every student receiving an Erasmus+ STUDIES grant has to submit a UU report as well. Writing the UU report is one of the university's conditions to receive and keep the grant. Only after submitting this report your Erasmus+ grant will be awarded definitively.

Your report will be made available (anonymously) to UU students preparing an exchange or research period abroad. Not all of them are Dutch-speaking, therefore we prefer to receive reports **written in English**.

Please use Tab to go to the next (text) box.

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> @gmail.com
faculty/college	Geography
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	Human Geography and Spatial Planning

destination city & country	London, UK
name university abroad	University COLlege London
start date	25 / sept / 2017 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	15 / dec / 2017 (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	During the application process a lot of feelings went through my mind. Is this the right choice, should I go at all or will I make friends. In the case of UCL especially the waiting is nerve-wrecking. UCL and University Utrecht have two different time lines. The deadlines for UU are set at a date on which UCL is not yet allowed to sign certain documents, this can be very stressful. For instance the Erasmus deadline at UU is before the start of the semester at UCL, however UCL cannot sign any paper until you are registered in person the first week of the semester. Luckily everything worked out fine and both Unies were able to help where they could.
counselling & support at Utrecht University	Utrecht University is very vast in their response to any questions you have, that made the application and preparation for the exchange much more endurable and gave a sense of certainty. I would usually get an answer either that same day or the day after.
academic preparation	I don't think I did much academic preparation. Before I went of course I looked up the courses/modules that I would have liked to take, however, especially in planning, most courses are not available to affiliate students. Also planning is part of a different department at UCL, so all my hopes of taking planning courses fell into the



theems, as the only available courses to affiliates where the introductory courses.  
I did not do any additional reading or research before I left.

language preparation

Does watching films count?, No I think as an VWO and WO student in the Netherlands, most of us have a relatively high English level, even if we don't believe it ourselves. I did no extra preparation, even with my dyslexia, and I have not experienced any difficulties. During my time here I made my own dictionary with words I had never heard of to improve my vocabulary.

finances

This was my first and biggest concern, London is a very expensive city and rent is extremely high. I made sure to start a study loan and save as much money as I could from the start of the year. I have not been without money here in London, but prices are high and of course loans are to be paid back. My advice to any future students would be, keep track of what you spend and what you spend it on and don't overspend even if you do have enough money.

**STUDY ABROAD PERIOD**

study programme (content and organisational issues)

As mentioned before, there is only a limited amount of courses available for exchange/affiliate students. Within geography there are a lot of choices but outside of your own department I thought it was just a very small amount of choices.

The courses/Modules were interesting and different from the ones I have taken at UU. It was hard work, as we had to write 4500 words per course (I took four), within a very short time. The assignments were known from the very first day, but the exact question or tasks were often not known until half way through the course.

One other thing that I found rather peculiar is that it is not possible to send in your work for feedback, you are allowed to ask questions and present your ideas to the professors, but you can not get actual feedback on your work. In my head it would make more sense to get feedback during the learning process as part of the learning instead of afterwards when you cannot implement what you have learned from the feedback into your work. This not knowing made me very insecure about my writing, and I still am today as I have not received any marks yet. In combination with this they keep telling us that the levels are very hard to reach.

academic quality of education activities

That differs per course, most courses were very high on a level of insights, learning to view the world through different theories, times and perspectives. But all courses are also very high on citing others. All work and assessment had prescribed literature readings and questions leaving little room for the student to come up with their own dilemmas and readings. To me the academic quality may have been very high, but I think that it takes more than reciting other people to come to better understand the contemporary world.

There were a couple of excursions in which we did go to see the world, but I believe they could have used more depth.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

The quality of support was okay, although often very slow, making you figure it out by yourself. They would always come back to you with advice and during office hours the professors took the time to listen and help where they could.

I do think that as for support it would be nice if they could value the term 1 students a bit more. Now they are excluded from a lot of services due to lack of time (healthcare, banking, etc). I especially experienced this with my dyslexia certificate. My certificate is accepted in Utrecht but UCL would not accept it because it was too old. I was asked to send in an English version (which did not exist) and told that I would need to be reexamined in London. However due to lack of time I would not be able to take part in this examination and thus not be able to have dyslexia support. They were very kind in telling me that if I ever needed help they would be there.



transfer of credits

I don't know about the transfer of credits, aside from UCL telling me that they won't have the final marks until the summer (far beyond the deadline) and that most universities do adjust the marks to their own standards.

**STUDENT LIFE**

welcome & orientation programme

I felt very welcomed, even though not much was clear about the process until short before the arrival, things worked out smoothly. They give you an introduction and introduce you to the other exchange students. I met some of my best friends at these first couple of Uni days, so don't hesitate to attend.

accommodation

Accommodation was fine, it was very expensive but fine, I had my own shower and share a kitchen and the housing was relatively close to campus which saved on travel expenses. Even though we had a couple of days without warm water I cannot really complain, it was kept clean by both staff and students and there was always someone at the front desk to help you with your issues.

I must say that I was very lucky with my flatmates, good flatmates can increase your experience and bad ones can bring it down.

leisure & culture

I tried to go somewhere every Saturday, from parks to pubs to museums. You should just do whatever you feel like and don't hesitate to invite random people to come along.

suggestions/tips

I would suggest you visit the Richmond Park, they have deer and beautiful scenery.  
Go to pubs and coffee bars, but don't forget your ID and student card, they can come in handy.  
Also Camden Market and area is very lively at night if you are looking for more nightlife.

**CONCLUSIONS**

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

Yes please do go, but don't underestimate the work and costs of living in London. Even though I had many setbacks and complications with the administrative stuff I would not have changed it for the world. Living in a city like London and living with students from all over the world was worth so much more.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

There is an ISOP so when it comes to accommodation you should apply for an early arrival, and take some time after or before (about a week or two) in which you don't have any school, so you can explore the city and surroundings.

Save this UU report for your own records and upload the report in your Erasmus+ file/application in Osiris within 30 days after finishing your study abroad period and in ANY case before the final deadline!

See *Erasmus+ Studies timeline and instructions* for more details. Please **upload in Word (.docx)** so we can delete your personal details between processing for grant purposes and publication on the website for future UU exchange students.