



UU Study Abroad Report Form

	Contact info at the IO.
faculty/college	Humanities Universiteit Utrecht
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's
name study programme	Islam & Arabisch

destination city & country	Haifa, Israel
name university abroad	Haifa University
start date	20/ 2 / 2023 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	8/ 6 / 2023 (dd/mm/yyyy)

PREPARATION
exchange application process
It was very clear what documents to hand in etc.
counselling & support at Utrecht University
I did not experience much counselling or support from the Utrecht University but it was not something that was needed so it was fine.
academic preparation
-
language preparation
-
finances
Israel is a very expensive country so I recommend to calculate that in.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD
study programme (content and organisational issues)
The study programme is separated from the programme that the Israeli's are following which is a shame, but the courses selected for the international students are nevertheless really great and interesting. The teachers are very much helpful and open individual ideas/interests.
academic quality of education activities
Very high.
counselling & support at receiving university abroad
counselling & support at Haifa University was very good. I was staying in Haifa in a period in which the situation in Israel was very much unstable but the University was very helpful and successful in providing a sense of safety.
transfer of credits
Very fast and smoothly.



STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

Not very good, classes started on the first day.

accommodation

The University provides the opportunity to live on campus in dorms, but I would absolutely not recommend that. The dorms are gross and very remote compared to the city centre because the University is situated on a hill. I lived downtown which was great because it was easy to walk to the city.

leisure & culture

The University requires a payment of a 1000 dollars for these kind of activities but they do not offer much, if you want to see Israel, you need to do it yourself.

suggestions/tips

Explore the country as much as you can because the courses are very easy to pass so you have much time to enjoy Israel!

CONCLUSIONS

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

Yes, Especially when you are interested in the Middle East, Israel is a very interesting country to visit and to hear the stories and perspectives of all the different people living there.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

Live downtown!!



UU Study Abroad Report Form

faculty/college	Faculty of Geosciences
level	bachelor's master's
name study programme	Human Geography and Spatial Planning

destination city & country	Haifa, Israel
name university abroad	University of Haifa
start date	20/02/2022
end date	02/06/2022

PREPARATION

exchange application process

To participate in the exchange program at the University of Haifa, previous years required selection. Therefore, I put a lot of time into my application letter and provided good grades, since this is the only thing you can influence. In order not to miss anything in the application process, I had made a list for myself with the required documents and deadlines. After I was selected by the University of Utrecht, I also had to deliver the necessary documents to the University of Haifa. This application process was quite a lot and a bit vague for me in the beginning, but fortunately I received the best help from the staff of the international office at the University of Haifa.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

During my preparations for my exchange, I ran into several questions and difficulties such as applying for my visa. However, I felt that I could always turn to Utrecht University and my exchange coordinator Mandy van den Houten for help, she helped me a lot. Also, I could always contact her during my exchange if something was wrong.

academic preparation

At the academic level, I didn't prepare very much. I did read a few things about the conflict and took the minor in Middle Eastern studies, which made sure I already had some knowledge about the region. I knew in advance that the courses I wanted to take there would be mainly about the region, so that prior knowledge was useful.

language preparation

In terms of language, I didn't particularly prepare either. I took several courses in English at the University of Utrecht and in retrospect I think that was enough.

finances



Before I left, I made an overview of my expected income and my expenses during my stay in Israel. This overview was also requested by the embassy, because they want to be sure that you will not run out of money there. This overview was very nice for yourself and I really recommend it. In hindsight I might have been a bit too optimistic; Israel is a very expensive country so make sure you leave with enough money.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)

The study program I attended at the University of Haifa was incredibly educational and interesting. The courses you can take range from content on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, on women in the Arab world, on Jewish Theology to Hebrew and Arabic. I really see this program as a once in a lifetime opportunity to better understand the conflict and the region. You will be taught by a mix of Palestinian and Israeli teachers which offers a unique insight into their perspective.

As for the organization, I am also very satisfied. There might have been some issues but this was always solved well and both the international office staff and the teachers were very accessible and you could easily go to them with questions. This put me very at ease during my exchange.

academic quality of education activities

As for the academic quality, I must say that the study pressure and level is a bit lower than I was used to at Utrecht University. I think that if you are in your second or third year of university in the Netherlands, the program at the university is fine. I mainly had to write a lot of essays, which also improves your academic skills and helps you adapt to what is expected of you there. In that respect, the program also contributed to the development of your academic skills. What I found to be a big plus of the program at the University of Haifa were the fieldtrips with different courses. This was very valuable and contributed to a deeper knowledge of the region.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

As I mentioned earlier, I received a lot of help from the staff of the international office at the University of Haifa. When I emailed them with questions, I often received a comprehensive answer within ten minutes. Also, when I had difficulties with my visa, one of the staff at the University of Haifa contacted the embassy in The Hague. In short, the University of Haifa helped me very well and they do everything to make you feel completely at ease.

transfer of credits

1 credit at the University of Haifa is 1.5 ECTS. In my opinion, it is almost impossible to get more than 20 ECTS in this exchange program. Given the shorter semester and the lower study load of the subjects at the University of Haifa, I think relatively speaking there is a fair amount of points given per subject. I think I got 15 ECTS for which you had to take 4 courses. If you want to do activities on the side, I think this is a fair number of subjects and points.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme



In the first week of the exchange program, the University of Haifa had scheduled lots of fun activities, including a city tour and dinner. With these activities you get to know the other exchange students better and I immediately felt at ease.

accommodation

If you want, you can stay in the dorms of the university. However, I looked for a room closer to the center since the university is 40 minutes by bus from the city center and on Friday evening and Saturday, because of shabbat, there are no buses going at all. So I also recommend, if possible, finding a room closer to the center. I stayed in the Bat Galim district, this district is located by the sea and is generally considered safe, it is 10 minutes from the center. I really liked this district.

leisure & culture

Because of the slightly lower study load, you'll have plenty of time to take trips to other cities or areas. Make sure you use that time, because there is so much beautiful and interesting stuff to see in Israel! The public transport works very well, only it doesn't run on Friday afternoons and Saturdays so make sure you plan your trips around that.

suggestions/tips

My tip is to enjoy and try to immerse yourself in the culture as much as possible. In addition, be alert in periods when tensions rise again and always let someone know where you are and try, especially as a girl, to travel together or at night on the streets. For more tips you can always contact me through the international Office!

CONCLUSIONS

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

I highly recommend this exchange program. It is educational and it offers a unique insight into a completely different culture and the prevailing conflict. I must honestly say that I think it is a completely different experience than an exchange to Barcelona, for example, but because of the strange culture and politics it is extra interesting and educational. I have been amazed and consider Israel as a whole as an open-air museum.

do you have any additional advice or comments?



UU Study Abroad Report Form

faculty/college	Humanities
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's
name study programme	Taal- en cultuurstudies

destination city & country	Haifa, Israel
name university abroad	Haifa University
start date	1 / 9 / 2019 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	9 / 1 / 2020 (dd/mm/yyyy)

PREPARATION

exchange application process

The application for Haifa University was exciting since there was only one spot for students from Utrecht University. I had to write a motivation letter but I think they randomly picked someone.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

The counselling and support at Utrecht University was very pleasant. They gave a lot of information about how to select a destination and how to write a motivation letter and so on. Also, during the process of applying they were very approachable by email.

academic preparation

-

language preparation

I didn't need any language preparation because my English was good enough to study in Haifa.

finances

It's important to realise that you'll not receive an Erasmus scholarship. I didn't find any other scholarships that applied to Israel. Israel is also not a very cheap country to live so make sure you saved some money!

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)

I was not the biggest fan of the study program at Haifa University. It was not so well organized, and the level is a lot lower than what we are used to at Utrecht University. But the topics of the courses were interesting. I did courses on terrorism, women in Israel, Arab culture and an Arabic language course. It was also kind of nice that university was not so hard because I had a lot of free time to travel and meet people 😊

academic quality of education activities

I didn't like the activities done by the university that much but we did a few fieldtrips with the teachers from the courses which was nice. For example, we visited a Kibbutz and went to the borders with Syria and Lebanon.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

Again, not so well organized.

transfer of credits



I think it is just fail or pass, so you don't have to worry about the credits. But I was not able to do enough courses so my studies delayed a little bit.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

Like I said before, Haifa University is not so well organized, so the orientation programme was not so good. They also love rules (in Israel in general haha). You are for example officially not allowed to hitch hike or travel in the West Bank. In the end it turned out that they didn't check any of these things so you are free to do what you want. So, don't worry about that.

Despite this, I met a lot of very nice people in my program. There are students from over the whole world and I made amazing friends!

accommodation

Haifa University recommends you to stay in the dorms at campus. I really recommend to not do this! Firstly, because as Dutch students we are not used to campus life and all the rules included in this. I also heard from other students that the dorms were dirty and badly equipped. Secondly, Haifa University is far from the city centre which makes it harder to get to know Haifa and Israelis. I stayed off-campus in a nice room with roommates I found on AirBnB. Most of my friends also lived in apartments found on for example Facebook. The neighbourhood we lived in is called Hadar and I would recommend it so everyone. Since I lived in the city I was able the really experience life in Israel and meet awesome people.

leisure & culture

Like I said, we had a lot of free time so we travelled a lot. Israel is a relatively small country and the public transport works well. I loved Israel and all the things you can do. Even after 5 months there was still a lot left to discover.

suggestions/tips

CONCLUSIONS

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

I wouldn't necessarily recommend Haifa University for educational reasons but I would definitely recommend going to study in Haifa. Israel is a very special country to live. By living in Haifa I learned so much about the culture, the conflict and the people.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

I feel like Israel is a destination everyone seems to have an opinion about. In my experience it was so awesome to go there and see for myself. I met wonderful people and learned so much about the country. Before going I felt like I had to "pick a side" in the conflict but when I was there I realised that it is too complicated for that. I think it already adds a lot of value to stay openminded and try to listen to people from both sides. Also, there is no reason to be afraid for your safety. Even as a woman I haven't felt unsafe 😊



UU Study Abroad Report Form

faculty/college	Faculty of Geosciences UU
level	bachelor's
name study programme	Sociale Geografie en Planologie / Human Geography and Planning
destination city & country	Haifa, Israel
name university abroad	Haifa University
start date	18-02-2019
end date	31-05-2019

PREPARATION

exchange application process

Very chaotic. The documents and forms I needed were scattered all over the website of the University of Haifa, with many broken links. The International School of the University of Haifa was friendly, but chaotic as well and I had to be very persistent to get answers to my questions. I ran into some trouble regarding my visa as well, all in all the process was pretty stressful. It was a good preparation for the wall of bureaucracy I ran into in Israel though.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

They were great, always quick to respond and very helpful.

academic preparation

Not really, I had already taken some conflict studies courses but it was not really necessary.

language preparation

None.

finances

I had saved up a bunch, Israel is definitely more expensive than the Netherlands.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)

They are so chaotic. Forms got lost, phone numbers got lost, I regularly received three emails about the same topic from different staff members, the International School did not communicate important information on time. Content-wise, the program is very interesting. I followed courses on refugee mental health, terrorism and responses, and Islamic fundamentalism. They also offered courses on women in Israel, Jewish philosophy and other courses on the anthropology of the region and the conflict. The academic level was definitely lower than I was used to, though the lecturers assigned a lot of readings (don't do all of them, it's not really necessary to enjoy the lectures).

academic quality of education activities

Aside from the lectures the International School organized a lot of fun weekendtrips and a few academic daytrips as well. We hiked in the desert in Mitzpe Ramon, in the Golan Heights and in other places and went close to the border with Lebanon. I learned a lot on these trips and it was just loads of fun.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad



Not great. The International School is in some weird feud with the dorms organization, so this caused a lot of problems for me and other students that were caught in the fire with little support from the International School. They were friendly, just not very helpful.

transfer of credits

Still trying to make this happen.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

We did a tour of the campus and a tour of the city which was nice, although again, the International School did not offer a lot information on things that would have been useful.

accommodation

I lived in Neve Yosef, in the city, in a shared apartment with two other girls. I had read some stories on how gross the dorms are (the stories are true, cockroaches everywhere once the weather got warmer) and wanted to find a place somewhere else. This was a little difficult but I lucked out in the end. Most of the international students live in the dorms, so although they are not the cleanest, if you're outgoing and like to socialize a lot I would still recommend this. The buses are not reliable, especially at night, so it was sometimes a little frustrating if I wanted to hang out with my friends. On the other hand, living in the middle of the city allowed me to observe daily Israeli life and be submerged in it a little more than the students that lived on campus.

leisure & culture

Israel is a small country but there is a lot to do, I rarely spend a weekend at home and sometimes on Tuesdays we would go to a different city or to the beach. I hiked a lot in the national park that is literally right next to the university. Went to the West Bank a few times, wish I had spent more time there to be honest.

suggestions/tips

Israel is a difficult country to live in, even for such a short time. Would 10/10 recommend going here, but maybe not as a first abroad experience to a difficult country. Be persistent when dealing with Israelis if you need something, be it your visa or some document from the International School. Travel a lot, it is a beautiful country with something for everyone. Visit the West Bank.. Don't act like you understand the conflict and have a solution, nobody does. Talk to people, be open. Write your experiences down.

CONCLUSIONS

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

Yes, it is a lot of trouble but you'll learn a lot and will change your perspective on many things. Incredibly worth it.

do you have any additional advice or comments?
