

Please note that UCM Madrid has decided to check more strictly on their language requirements. The student report below mention that UCM does not always check these requirements, but since 2021 the requirements unfortunately have become more strict, and you must be able to prove B1 Spanish at the time of nomination at UCM (see also the heading "requirements" on the destinations page).



UU Study Abroad Report Form

	Contact info at the IO.
faculty/college	Geneeskunde
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	Biomedische wetenschappen

destination city & country	Madrid, Spain
how did you travel to your destination?	train
name university abroad	UCM
start date	05 / 09 / 2022 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	20 / 01 / 2023 (dd/mm/yyyy)

PREPARATION

exchange application process

The exchange application process is quite straight-forward: everything you need to do is on the website of the UU. Whenever you have any questions, you can ask the international office. When you make your learning agreement, keep in mind that this will determine the faculty you will be administered to, but that you can still change the subjects later if you want to, even when you realise in your first week of the exchange that you want to do something else. Make sure you look at the grants you can get, because these are very helpful. Also, I ended up speaking with my study adviser a lot to make sure the exchange fits well into your bachelors degree (I took an extra year for language classes and exchange)

counselling & support at Utrecht University

The support by UU was very good. Whenever I had any question regarding the application process and the erasmus grant, they were always ready to help, especially Tessel Arendsen, who was the contact person from the international office for UCM.

academic preparation

Other than following the language courses at UU, I did not do much academic preparation. I only made sure to have a plan for when I came back. In Spain I followed the courses of the first year of History, which was very different from my own bachelors in Utrecht, but because most of the classes were for first years, that was not a problem.

language preparation

For UCM it is necessary to have a B1 level in spanish before attending the university. If you want to, you are able to follow a language course over there at the start of the semester. I did not do this language course, but from what I heard from other students, this was not too useful, as it was only an online course. For the language preparation I did the minor in spanish at UU, which teaches you spanish until level B1. I really liked these classes and recommend them. With the level of B1 I was able to follow courses at UCM in spanish. In the beginning it was very challenging, but it quickly became easier. But while the classes were fine, it stayed very hard for me to talk to people my own age in spanish.

finances

Financially, the biggest changes were that I did not have a job in Spain and that my housing was more expensive. A part of this was compensated by the erasmus grant. While you could probably find a job in Spain, I personally did not think it worth it, as minimum wage is almost half of what you get in the Netherland. For the



travelling to the destination I used the Travel Green Grant so my train would be compensated. With this I could buy an interrail ticket. However, keep in mind that there are also costs for the seat reservations on the trains. For the train back I used the grant given out by my bachelors degree.

Daily expenses: Groceries are a bit cheaper in Spain, as well as eating out and getting drinks. Especially in the summer, this meant I was eating out a lot more than in the Netherlands, so I spent a bit more, but not much. If you like to go out a lot, expect to often pay 20 euros for entrance.

Many people also went travelling to other cities in the weekends and days off. I only ended up going to places that were closer to Madrid, but if you want to go to the south of Spain, to Morocco or to Portugal, it would be smart to save up for that.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)

I only chose courses at the history and geography faculty, the first three being the first year bachelor courses from the history study:

- Historia del Pensamiento: I really liked this course. The classes were about philosophers from ancient times and how these related to the political situation at the time, and in the seminars we read The Banquet by Plato, about which we had to write essays.
- Historia del Arte Antiguo: This course was about the art and architecture from Mesopotamia, Egypt, Greece and Rome. In the seminars we had to record a video of a myth, we went to the egyptian temple that stands in Madrid and we went to the museum of archeology.
- Prehistoria I: This was about prehistory, talked about chronologically. For the seminars, we went on a Saturday to a few excavation sites in Spain, where we saw a site with elephant bones and later we went to see cave paintings further up north, which was very interesting.
- Antopología Cultural: This course, the only course in archaeology that I did, discussed mainly the concepts of culture. For the seminars we watched movies and documentaries.
- History of women and gender: This was the only course that I followed in English. Even though it was a fourth year class, it was very easy to follow and very interesting. Most of the students there were erasmus students as well. We didn't do an exam, but we had to write two essays, a smaller one and a bigger one at the end. With the seminars we went to two musea and we watched movies.

academic quality of education activities

The quality of education in Spain is very different from the Netherlands, and it feels more like school than like university to me. The classes were big and for many of the classes no powerpoints were used. In the Netherlands I'm used to that the most important thing is that you understand what was going on and that you can use the way of thinking to prove you understand. In Spain it was mainly about learning information. The exams were only at the end of the semester, which meant that the last month I was here, I was mainly studying, while it was easier during the rest of the semester. The content of the exams was also different than what I'm used to. For the history of women and gender class and historia del pensamiento we had to write essays, but the other exams were mostly about facts: learning the buildings by heart from historia del arte antiguo, knowing the names of the excavation sites, their content and who dug it up, and knowing names of researchers at antropologia cultural.

Friends of mine that studies in different faculties also said that the workload was bigger than in their home universities, but that it was less complicated.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

The support at UCM was very limited. There was a welcome session (only in spanish), but other than that you had to figure everything out yourself. To me it was not always clear who to contact and answers to emails often weren't as quick as in Utrecht, but everything did work out in the end. The teachers were most of the time very



helpful and understanding, so if you ask for accommodations, they will usually think with you about how to solve something (for example, two of my exams overlapped in time. Both teachers answered quickly and presented a lot of options. However, I had also sent this email to the faculty and I never received an answer). Remember also that people take weekends and holidays very seriously, so make sure you send your emails on time.

transfer of credits

I have yet to receive the transcript of records, so I don't know this yet.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

As I said before, the welcome and orientation programme were quite limited. There was a welcome session for all Erasmus students at the university where they told you all the things you needed to get done for the exchange. For the social life there was a student organisation for erasmus students, the ESN network. They organised welcome activities in the first month, including a weekend away called the intergration weekend. After the first month, it was mainly drinks and partying on the Thursdays. They also organised sports for erasmus students and weekend trips. I only went to the Integration weekend, where I ended up meeting most of my friends for the rest of the semester.

accommodation

I had a room in Almagro, to the east of Chamberí. While it is not in the centre, it was very walkable and the metro and buses were quick, so to me it was perfect. Many of the erasmus students lived in Chamberí or Arguelles, as it was the closest to the university and also close to the city centre. My two favourite neighbourhoods were Malasaña and Chueca, so if you can, I highly recommend trying to find acommodation there, but for me it was only a 15 minute walk. The city centre is the neighbourhood Sol, but that is very touristy and busy, so I wouldn't recommend staying there. It was 575 euros a month, including services, and with 5 roommates, which was similar to what other people paid as well. I found the place on uniplaces.com, but it was owned by Homiii. I ended up having to pay fees to both, which made it quite expensive. However, I can't give any advise on how to avoid these, I don't know where you would find it without. I really liked the roommates that I was with, and while the room was fine, it was a bit too expensive for what it was. When looking for a room, make sure it has a window. While my room did have a window, it was at the lowest floor (half-cellar), so there was no direct sunlight.

leisure & culture

It's hard to think what to write here, because there is no chance I can capture it in a piece of text. To start, Madrid is a really nice city in which there are a lot of neighbourhoods with their own character. It is big, however, it is very well connected with public transport and if you want, it's also walkable (unfortunatly it's horrible for bikes). Especially in the summer, we went to have some drinks and tapas very often. There are countless terraces in the city and they are always full, which makes it such a happy city to be in. In the beginning I had put the expectation on myself that I would go out partying a lot, and while you can definetly do that if you want, I quickly realised that I prefer doing other things. I loved going to the Retiro park, there are countless museums that are worth visiting, I went out for food and drinks with friends very often, there are so many small cinemas and in one month there were different film festivals every week, I went to weekly bachata and salsa courses offered by another university (highly recommend) and in the weekends we made trips to other cities (Toledo, Salamanca, Segovia, Valencia, etc.) and to the mountains to go to lakes or make hikes. There is just so much to do!

In terms of culture, there were a lot of holidays which we don't have in the Netherlands, so look up which days and which traditions there are. Then the rhythm of the day was quite a bit different to what I'm used to. Especially that the day was a lot longer than in the Netherlands. My classes started quite early and ended early



as well, while all the fun things to do are in the evening, often until late, so I ended up really needing a siesta and taking naps after classes. The shops are open until a lot later than in the Netherlands, and most shops and supermarkets are closed on Sundays.

suggestions/tips

Before you go, make sure you already order your personalised public transport card. Mine took almost a month to arrive and that made using the metro and buses a bit expensive. You can also make an appointment you go, so you'll get the card there. With the metro/bus card it was only 10 euros a month for unlimited use of the Madrid public transport.

Consider staying the whole year :). While I ended up staying half a year, many of my friends will stay the whole year and if I could do it again, I would choose for a whole year as well.

Take the train to Madrid! It is really doable if you plan it well, and it's easier to take more things with you than in a plane.

If you struggle with what clothes to take: it stays summer for a long time, but the winter is not that much warmer than the Netherlands, so you should bring sweaters and a wintercoat as well.

CONCLUSIONS

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

Yes, I would definitely recommend going to Madrid in an exchange. I had an amazing semester and met so many people. The city itself is such a nice place to live, with so many things to do, it is also a clean city with a bunch of green spaces and the touristy areas are easily avoidable. The spanish culture is very nice, especially in the summer/ autumn. The system of the university is definitely different from the Netherlands and a bit less well organised, but that is also just a difference between the Netherlands and Spain in general. I highly recommend going!

do you have any additional advice or comments?

see suggestions/ tips



UU Study Abroad Report Form

	Contact info at the IO.
faculty/college	Geowetenschappen
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	Global Sustainability Science

destination city & country	Madrid, Spain
how did you travel to your destination?	By plane
name university abroad	Universidad Complutense Madrid
start date	01 / 09 / 2022 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	31 / 01 / 2023 (dd/mm/yyyy)

PREPARATION

exchange application process

The application process from Utrecht University was quite straightforward. The only important thing to keep in mind are all the deadlines. However, it was difficult to find the available courses in English from each faculty on the website of UCM. Especially when your Spanish is not the best it can take some time to understand where to find the right information. However, the contact person of Utrecht University was really helpful.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

Overall, the support from Utrecht University was really good. However, during my Erasmus I had to change courses because of a clash in my schedule. Because of this, I needed to send my new courses to UU and needed their approval. Maybe good to know that UU is not straightforward with deciding upon the level of the courses. I followed the same course at the same time at UCM as another student from UU did, however, our faculties decided differently on what level the courses were. This caused me problems regarding some graduation requirements in the end. So be careful with deciding your courses and ask beforehand the level of the courses you are going to take.

academic preparation

I didn't do anything regarding academic preparation. I took mainly first year courses, because I did not need any requirements to follow these. I did try to improve my Spanish myself during the vacation.

language preparation

The language requirements used to be different, however, it changed right after we were selected. Luckily, I already had the right level of Spanish. We all had a mandatory Spanish-level test to do before the summer holiday. I really recommend improving your Spanish before this test in order to score better at the test. The test will decide your Spanish level and will decide the level of your language course in the beginning. It will help you a lot during your daily life and also at the university.

finances

I used my savings and DUO to finance everything. Although the life in Spain is relatively cheaper, you live a different kind of life than I was used to in Utrecht. Rent in Madrid is more expensive than in Utrecht. Besides, it is quite normal to pay a month rent for administration costs. If you like to go to a club then I guarantee you it will cost you way more in Madrid than in the NL. In the end, you always spend more than you expected but it is all worth it.



STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)

I was part of the Psychology faculty but took two courses in the Economic faculty as well. During the first two weeks you can still change courses if you want. Just make sure you go to the international office on time. Especially in the beginning it is really busy at the office and sometimes the line was an hour.

academic quality of education activities

Depending on the course the quality of the education really different. For all the psychology courses I followed, I barely had to do any homework. For psychology I took two first year courses and one third-year course. 'Anthropological and Sociological Bases of Behaviour' was for example a first-year and easy course. Besides, Educational Psychology was a third-year course and was easy. Psychology of learning was a first-year course and that was a really difficult course and many people failed this course. At the Economic Faculty, I took principles of management science and economic history. Both were first-year courses, it was doable but you really need to work for it compared to the psychology courses. There is more work outside the lessons to do. Economic history was a course that many failed as well.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

The international office was not really well organised in the beginning. They would not answer any emails and the opening hours are really weird. However, now at the end of my stay, they answered my emails within a day. My friends from different faculties experienced the same regarding not answering emails. Especially during the beginning and the end of the semester it is chaos at the international office of UCM. They are, however, quite flexible regarding accepting courses and resits. The teachers are really trying to help especially for Erasmus students by offering them other dates for doing exams and postponing deadlines when going on a trip.

transfer of credits

UCM told me that they will handle this with UU, so we will see.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

There was only a welcome session once. However, there is ESN that provides an integration weekend, which was really nice. There are also the companies called Citylife and Smartinsiders that mainly organise activities for internationals. However, this is not part of UCM. UCM itself does not provide anything more than a welcome session.

accommodation

I got my room via Helphousing, it is a good company and organised well. I lived in the neighbourhood La Latina. I would really recommend living there because its authentic. Other 'student' neighbourhoods are chamberi and malasana. I paid around 600 euros per month. This is quite normal for Madrid. As aforementioned, the administration costs are high, which is normal in Madrid but still a waste of money.

leisure & culture

The Spanish music, food, weather and people have made my experience even better. Around 20.00 Madrid comes alive, the citizens of Madrid are meeting outside to have some tapas and drinks. Most Spanish people do not speak English, however, this has its charm. They are always really trying to understand you! As a girl, even at night, I have never felt unsafe when walking back home.

suggestions/tips



I would suggest to go to Sevilla, it was my favourite city of Spain. Overall just be open to everyone and do whatever you want and you will have the best time! Do not worry to much about credits, just enjoy and it will all be fine in the end!

CONCLUSIONS

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

I would definitely recommend Madrid as a destination, it is a friendly and big city. Even after 5 months I didn't do everything I wanted to do. I would say you will never be bored in Madrid. Moreover, because there are so many universities in Madrid, it doesn't really matter to which one you go. Although I think UCM was a good university. There are so many international people that you will definitely make new friends!

do you have any additional advice or comments?

In the end, I think it does not really matter where you go, it will always be fun!



UU Study Abroad Report Form

	Contact info at the IO.
faculty/college	Geosciences
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	Madrid, Spain
how did you travel to your destination?	Airplane
name university abroad	Universidad Complutense de Madrid
start date	31 / 08 / 2022 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	20 / 01 / 2023 (dd/mm/yyyy)

PREPARATION

exchange application process

I thought the exchange application process at UU was really easy and clear. I handed in all my documents on time and in January I heard for which destination I was selected. After the selection I got more info via email and my contact person at UU sent a lot of information and helped with communication with UCM.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

I thought the counselling and support at UU was very good. My contact person at UU described very clearly all the steps I needed to take for my application at UCM and also organized a useful meeting with other UU students that had also been selected for UCM. Whenever I had any questions she was always there to help.

academic preparation

I did take an A1 and A2 Spanish course beforehand, which I did not really need for my classes as I planned on taking only courses in English, but in the end it turned out for these classes to be necessary for my application since UCM changed their language requirements for Spanish from none to a B1 level.

language preparation

During the application UCM did not have any language requirements for Spanish. However, around February of 2022 when I had already been selected for UCM suddenly they changed this and required a minimum level of B1 in Spanish, even if you only planned on taking English courses. For me in the beginning it was a little bit stressful because I only had an official certificate for A2 Spanish, but my UU exchange coordinator helped me out a lot and made sure I could still go on exchange to UCM despite not having an official certificate for Spanish at B1 level, as it was sort of UCM's fault for changing their language requirements after the selection had already taken place.

finances

I had been saving up money for a long time before my exchange started because I always knew I wanted to go on exchange. However, I definitely needed the Erasmus grant because you always end up spending more money than expected and rent in Madrid is not too expensive but definitely not cheap either.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)



I did my exchange program at the faculty of psychology. Psychology is not my field of study at UU but I was still glad I took courses in this department because I find psychology really interesting. The courses I took were Social and Personality development, Social Psychology I, Psychology of Human Memory and Learning, Personality Psychology and Psychology of Intervention and Treatment. These were all second and third year courses. I ended up having to change the courses I selected before my exchange since it turned out to be quite a puzzle finding 5 courses that fit in your schedule and do not overlap timewise. This was because at the psychology department the only English group only had classes in the morning anywhere between 9:00 and 14:00 and studying full time meant that you had about 20 contact hours per week. In the end everything turned out to be fine but if you're taking English courses don't expect to be able to do all courses you decided on before your exchange because usually they overlap (especially if you're taking courses from different years).

academic quality of education activities

Before my exchange I had the stereotype that Spanish universities would be less work but this was not the case. In Utrecht I was used to only having around 6 contact hours per week, so I was really surprised to find out that at UCM you have to take 5 courses simultaneously which meant for me that I had to go to school five days a week for around 3-4 hours per day (+ 2 hours of commute time as the psychology and economic faculty are in Somosaguas which is a bit further away from the city centre). When it comes to the contents of the courses, I think the classes at UCM are a bit more similar to HBO-level than Dutch WO-level. Although I found the contents of the courses easier than in Utrecht, bear in mind that you do have five classes simultaneously and more contact hours than in Utrecht, which meant that for almost every course we had homework every week which still cost a lot of time. So the courses themselves may be a bit easier than in Utrecht, but expect to still spend around the same amount of hours on your studies at UCM as you do in Utrecht.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

I thought the Office of International Relations was really helpful. If I had any doubts I would just stop by their office at the faculty of psychology and they would always be there to help me out.

transfer of credits

I actually didn't have to put in any effort to be able to receive my transcript of records from the host university, they emailed it to me automatically in the beginning of february which was really nice.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

There was a welcome programme for Erasmus students from the whole university of UCM as well as a particular session for students studying at the psychology faculty. In both meetings they were mostly speaking Spanish although they did repeat important information in English as well. The university wide welcome session was very useful as they explained how you had to activate your UCM email account and things like that.

accommodation

I found my student room through a website called housinganywhere. It was a 10 minute walk from Sol (most central square in Madrid) and I paid around 575 euros per month, which I would normally never pay in Utrecht but I think it was really worth the price because of the location and since it was only for five months. The housing market is a lot easier in Madrid than in Utrecht, so if you start looking for rooms around June that is fine, but the earlier the better of course. Student rooms in the centre are usually around 500 euros, I think further away from the city centre the rent will be lower but if you can afford it I would definitely recommend to try to find a room in the city centre of Madrid because otherwise you may miss out on social activities. Good neighbourhoods that are close to the city centre are Chueca, La Latina, Lavapiés and Malasaña. This is not always the case, but it's common for landlords to ask for an administration fee worth one month of rent in Madrid, money that you will not get back at the end of your stay. So keep this in mind.



leisure & culture
As Madrid is a huge city there are so many things to do and you won't get bored easily. Also because Madrid is so centrally located in Spain it's really easy to travel to other Spanish cities, I definitely recommend visiting Toledo and Segovia as they are so close! Although I highly recommend traveling around Spain as Erasmus is the perfect time to do so, you will also find so many interesting places in Madrid itself. The neighborhood Lavapiés is great to try out different cuisines around the world and has a big vintage market every Sunday called El Rastro, Malasaña is a neighborhood filled with fun bars and vintage shops and Chueca is the queer neighborhood. If you want to find some tranquility within the big city stop by Parque del Retiro as it's similar to Central Park in New York City.
suggestions/tips
Although you do have an Erasmus network in Madrid, I found that the organizations Citylifemadrid and Smartinsiders organize a lot more activities for international students as well as trips, both abroad and within Spain. A lot of the activities they organize in Madrid are free or low cost, such as walking tours, museum visits or language exchanges, but they also organize paid weekend trips to different Spanish cities and I went on a trip to Marrakesh and the Sahara desert with one of these organizations which was absolutely amazing, so I definitely recommend to join their activities and trips (which is also a great way to meet people and make friends)

CONCLUSIONS
would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain
Yes! Madrid is an amazing city and there's so much to do. It's located very central in Spain so it's very easy to travel to other Spanish cities from Madrid. The cost of living may be a bit higher in Madrid compared to other Spanish cities, but for a capital city (compared to London, Paris, Amsterdam etc.) I think Madrid is very affordable and you never get bored in such a lively city.
do you have any additional advice or comments?
I don't have any additional advice but I want to wish everyone doing their Erasmus in Madrid an amazing time, I definitely had and I'm really grateful for the opportunity I got to study at UCM!



UU Study Abroad Report Form

	Contact info at the IO.
faculty/college	Faculty of Science
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	College of Pharmaceutical Sciences

destination city & country	Madrid, Spain
how did you travel to your destination?	Airplane
name university abroad	Universidad Complutense de Madrid
start date	2 / 9 / 2022 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	29 / 6 / 2023 (dd/mm/yyyy)

PREPARATION

exchange application process	Pretty easy, as there was a form/website in osiris you just had to follow
counselling & support at Utrecht University	Great, they replied quick to emails.
academic preparation	n/a
language preparation	I took a Spanish course outside UU to prepare for the classes in Spanish.
finances	The Erasmus+ grant was of great help.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)	Philosophy courses. The university of UCM is quite traditional, as in you do not really email but have to go to offices to get things in order. They do not speak/badly speak english so be prepared to have to communicate in some Spanish or take a UCM student as translator or something with you.
academic quality of education activities	Very small classes. Classes were easier than at UU.
counselling & support at receiving university abroad	You have to look for it yourself, but help can be given.
transfer of credits	Went fine.



STUDENT LIFE
welcome & orientation programme
Mostly in Spanish, also for people who did not speak it.
accommodation
Great! But it will be more expensive than in Utrecht.
leisure & culture
Loved the Madrid lifestyle, always things happening in the streets, lots of cafes, bars, festivals etc...
suggestions/tips
Research well before renting a room, lots of people get scammed.

CONCLUSIONS
would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain
Definitely! Madrid is an amazing city to live and study in and there are loads of international people there. The culture is really great, as is the weather!
do you have any additional advice or comments?
n/a



UU Study Abroad Report Form

	Contact info at the IO.
faculty/college	Humanities
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	Taal-en Cultuurstudies

destination city & country	Madrid, Spain
how did you travel to your destination?	by plane
name university abroad	Universidad Complutense de Madrid
start date	23 / 01 / 2023 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	01 / 06 / 2023 (dd/mm/yyyy)

PREPARATION

exchange application process

Applying for the exchange destination, in my case i wanted to go abroad principally because of internship, was not that hard and pretty clear, but the whole application process after was sort of complicated and sometimes stressed me out. You have to have a lot of signatures and other information so start early with this process.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

I had on contactperson at the UU who helped me preparing all the documents (in the beginning). That was really nice and necessary because there are so many things to do.

academic preparation

I didn't do any special academic preparation for my study and internship abroad. Both of them, especially the internship, matched well with my followed courses at the UU. I followed some courses that were so different from what i normally that it was more difficult, like demografia for example, but overall the studies were doable with my knowledge.

language preparation

Because of my earlier Spanish courses I didn't have to follow special courses, but now you do have to have a B2 level to get into the Complutense so take that into account. That's really important and necessary.

finances

I used my savings for this period abroad. It is not cheap obviously, but depending on where you live and extra costs, and with the Erasmus grant it is do-able.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)

During my abroad period I followed 4 courses in total. Two were taught in Spanish and two in English. Even though i focus on linguistics at the UU, they put me under 'sociologia y ciencias politicas' faculty, which was strange. BEcause of this, I did 3 courses there and 1 at the filologia (language) faculty, because that was allowed. I had a bunch of different subjects which made it hard sometimes but still really interesting.

academic quality of education activities



In general, the academic quality is good, even though I feel like it is less that in the Netherlands. The classes are pretty interactive and there are a lot of subjects that they discuss.
counselling & support at receiving university abroad
Even though there was a welcome session for expats, there was only one office (in my faculty) for Erasmus students to go to. I went there several times for the Learning Agreement. In the beginning they helped me but sometimes the information wasn't that helpful or my problems with the LA couldn't be solved and had to wait really long on the mail. Futhermore, i don't think there was any place for counselling or support, at least I have not heard of that at the school.
transfer of credits
I was worried the complutense would be late with the transfer of credits, so i send them a mail, but that wasn't necessary afterall because in the end, they send you a mail with your grades, and thus your credits. So that's pretty well arranged.

STUDENT LIFE
welcome & orientation programme
There was a mandatory welcome session in the beginning of the semester. It was really informational and not actually about getting to know fellow international students, which i think is a shame. It would be better to also organise a welcome session to just meet other students. Furthermore, you had a week to go to every class you possibly want to discover which courses you wanted to follow. You had the ones that you put in your learning agreement, but you could also freely go to other ones, for example when your timeschedule didn't fit.
accommodation
I found my apartment throught Spotahome, but it took some time. It is recomendable to start on time in your search for a room and always look out if the place looks thrustworthy. I recommend staying more in the centre of Madrid because that's were you will be most of the time probably.
leisure & culture
In your spare time you can go visit places in the city, like restaurants, clubs, a bar or just beautiful parks and small cities close to Madrid. You can also join ESN or Citylife to join their events. In this way you can meet new people and explore the Spanish culture and new places.
suggestions/tips
Go on trips or go to events organised by organisations like ESN or Citylife. Or you can just go to events that you hear about through a groupchatt about activities and fiestas in Madrid. It is really fun and a good way to meet new people and gain new experiences.

CONCLUSIONS
would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain
Yes i would, even though the Complutense university is not the best with regard to (quick) communication in general. The teachers and students are really nice and you have the chance to meet a lot of new (international) people. In my case however, there were not that many English taught subjects available on the faculty (sociologia), so if your Spanish isn't that good you have to take that into account. But Madrid is a lovely and very international city and you will never be bored when you're there. It is such an experience and I really recommend it!
do you have any additional advice or comments?
No



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	Madrid, Spain
how did you travel to your destination?	Plane
name university abroad	Universidad Complutense de Madrid
start date	20 / 01 / 2022 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	01 / 07 / 2022 (dd/mm/yyyy)

PREPARATION	
exchange application process	Firstly I applied to Complutense via the University of Utrecht. This is a very easy process and worked very well. When applying to Complutense itself it was a bit harder. The univeristy gives you a lot of information and sometimes it was unclear for me where to find what. A lot of things on the website were also written in Spanish. Luckily the exchange officer in Spain was very helpul and friendly.
counselling & support at Utrecht University	This year it was a bit harder to get the counselling and support at Utrecht University since you could not pass by the office due to COVID. But, all the exchange and international officers were very nice and helpful via e-mail if you had any questions.
academic preparation	In Utrecht I study Psychology and in Spain I also followed courses at the psychology faculty. I tried to find courses which I didn't have yet in Utrecht so i could expand my knowledge. The level of the courses was very different, dependent also for which year the course was given.
language preparation	The year before going to Spain I followed the minor 'Spanish Language & Culture' in which I learned Spanish to a B1/B2 level. I would really recommend learning at least some level of Spanish since it is also very helpful in your daily life in Madrid & because it is fun to try to do courses in another language.
finances	I saved money before going to Madrid by working and I also received the Erasmus+ Grant. Compared to other cities in Spain, Madrid is very expensive. I paid 500 euros for my room. The supermarkets, restaurants etc. are somewhat cheaper then in the Netherlands and you only have to pay 20 euros per month for public transport.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD	
study programme (content and organisational issues)	I studied courses at the faculty of psycohlogy. Universidad Complutense also gives you the opportunity to follow courses in other faculties. In the first week when you apply you can basically follow all different courses



to see if they suit you and after decide if you want to change. I did do this with two of my courses but I stayed at the psychology faculty.

academic quality of education activities

The classes are way smaller then I was used to in the Netherlands. You were basically sitting in a small classroom like in high school. You had a more personal bond with the teachers. Compared to the Netherlands, you had a lot more assignments in between during the semester. The exams were also very different from the Dutch exams, where you could also choose not to fill in a question when answering multiple choice questions. If you gave a wrong answer, you were deducted points. I had to get used to this because sometimes I did not know whether it was smarter to guess or not to fill in the question.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

The exchange officer at the Universidad Complutense was very friendly. I received quick replies to my mails and all my questions. However, the office was not open very often and you had to plan well when you could drop by.

transfer of credits

In process

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

There was a welcome meeting online from the university itself. This meeting was held entirely in Spanish, so for this it was very useful to be able to speak some Spanish. In this online meeting, there was also a chat in which people were asked which faculty they were studying at. This way, the first whatsapp groups were created and it was easy to get to know people in the beginning.

accommodation

I found my room online via HelpHousing. This is an agency that rents out different buildings for shorter periods of time to people who are doing an exchange or an internship, for example. The positive thing about this company is that when you arrive, you arrive safely in a house. The negative side of this company is that you have to pay an 'administration fee' that is equal to one month's rent. You will not get this amount back either. I lived in the Lavapiés district with great pleasure. Other nice neighbourhoods are La Latina and Malasaña.

leisure & culture

You can't get bored in Madrid. There are so many things to do, restaurants to eat in and events to attend. It is a very big city with a lot of atmosphere and even after living there for six months I still don't feel like I have seen everything. Most museums are free for students and the nightlife is also very varied. Madrid as a city is very safe and clean and I can highly recommend living in it.

suggestions/tips

Look for a room in the centre and do not live near the university. All life is in the centre. Make sure your room has a window (many of my friends did not have a window and then it can be a bit dark in your room). Be sure to go to the smaller towns around Madrid (Toledo, Segovia, Avila), they are beautiful places that you won't get to easily again.

CONCLUSIONS

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

I would definitely recommend Madrid for an exchange. It is a beautiful city, very safe to live in and you will never be bored. I really had to get used to the way things were done at the university. They do things very differently than in the Netherlands and they are way more 'tranquilo'/calm then here.. But I think this is a good experience to have, also to see that things don't always have to go the way they do in the Neherlands.



do you have any additional advice or comments?

Try to learn some Spanish. It will really make your life much easier there. Madrileños are quite proud of their language so they will respect you more if you talk to them in their own language.



UU Study Abroad Report Form

faculty/college	Faculteit Geesteswetenschappen
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's
name study programme	Kunstmatige Intelligentie

destination city & country	Madrid, Spain
name university abroad	Universidad Complutense de Madrid
start date	1 / 9 / 2021 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	31 / 1 / 2022 (dd/mm/yyyy)

PREPARATION	
exchange application process	I applied during covid times for the exchange and therefore the application process was kind of difficult and annoying as well. We heard only a couple weeks before we could do the exchange so some things had to be done very last minute. Overall I feel like there was a lot of paper work. But the UU has good resources and personnel to help you with gathering information or questions.
counselling & support at Utrecht University	I had very good experience with the counselling & support at UU. They'll respond very fast and clearly and are always willing to help.
academic preparation	I applied for the faculty of Informatics and didn't have to do any additional academic preparation for the courses I took at UCM, but I did the Spanish minor at UU.
language preparation	For my courses at the faculty of Informatics I only needed English since I took only courses in English. I did follow the Spanish minor here at UU and I recommend doing that, because it is more fun when you understand some things in Spanish. But in my experience I didn't speak that much Spanish because of the international Erasmus bubble I was in.
finances	I did save money beforehand, because I wanted to enjoy my time in Madrid without having to worry about money. But Madrid is in general cheaper than the Netherlands, so with only DUO you'll be fine as well.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD	
study programme (content and organisational issues)	I applied for the faculty of Informatics, but also wanted to do courses from psychology. But in my experience this was a lot of paperwork + emailing so my faculty recommended not taking courses from psychology. At first I was confused about when the courses would take place, but at most uni's in Spain they work with 2 semesters. So you'll take at least 4 courses at the same time. Don't worry if you have to change courses while the semester already started. It is normal that (international) students switch courses in the first week or two. Besides that I had to get used to the different way of teaching and uni life there, but it was also cool experiencing that.
academic quality of education activities	



There was room for choosing relatively easy or very hard courses, so you can choose yourself what you want to do/learn/are interested in.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

There was an Erasmus office at my faculty, so when/if you encounter problems you could go there or mail them. I also applied for the buddy programme, which was very nice. I got coupled with a girl from my faculty, so she could give me a tour on campus and give me advice + recommendations about for example courses at the university.

transfer of credits

I'm still in this process, and I'm not sure how that goes actually.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

I'm not sure there was a big welcome & orientation programme at my university actually. But I must say that didn't bother me. There are a lot of things you can do for Erasmus students tho (parties, city trips, language exchanges etc). And it is so easy meeting people, because many are open for new friendships. There are also facebook groups and whatsapp groups for Erasmus students that you can join.

accommodation

I stayed the first week at the Bastardo Hostel. Which is a very modern, cool and cheap hostel at a very nice location. It is nice having an accommodation from the start, but for me it was good to be able to explore the different neighbourhoods before moving in a room. I found mine through idealista, on a very good location and for a good price as well. Finding a room is not too hard and I would definitely recommend living in the city centre, especially near Plaza de Espana and Malasana.

leisure & culture

So much fun! The food, going out, drinks, everything is amazing.

suggestions/tips

- There are a lot of rooftop bars, which is very fun and beautiful.
- And if you like to dance, go to the salsa/bachata bars. Even if you don't know how to dance, everyone will help you learn it.
- Get a personalized metro card. For only 20 euro each month you can take the bus and metro as many times as you want.

CONCLUSIONS

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

A hundred percent YES. Madrid is my favourite city of all time now! The buildings are beautiful, the people are very welcoming and nice, the food is amazing. Every minute of every day there are people on the street, and I felt very safe at all times. You can go for drinks any time, going out is amazing, the weather is very good. I could go on and on about all the good things in Madrid 😊

do you have any additional advice or comments?

Just do the exchange. It is very fun while you're there, but even after it gives you so much like special friendships. You'll learn so much from the people you meet from different countries and cultures, but also about yourself.



UU Study Abroad Report Form

faculty/college	Law, economics and governance
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's
name study programme	Bestuurs- en Organiseringswetenschap

destination city & country	Madrid, Spanje
name university abroad	Universidad Complutense Madrid
start date	5 / 09 / 2019 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	26 / 01 / 2020 (dd/mm/yyyy)

PREPARATION

exchange application process

The application process starts with applying through your own university. This was no problem and worked very good. The applying to Complutense was a little bit harder. The university provides you with a lot of information about the things you need to finish before coming to Spain, which is very helpful. A lot of information can also be found online. This is very useful except for the fact that everything is written in Spanish. At times it can be hard to understand find the information you need. Therefore it is very nice that the office at Complutense replied very quickly.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

The counselling & support at Utrecht University good. It was nice that we had several meetings about experiences abroad. Also a meeting was arranged where you could meet Dutch students going to the same city as you.

academic preparation

In Utrecht I study public administration and organizational sciences. In Spain I followed courses at the 'economics and business faculty' because this is the only faculty that offers sufficient amount of courses in English. I did not really prepare beforehand because I have some background in business. Some courses are very hard if you do not have an economic background and some are very well doable. In Spain you will have a week to orient on possible courses and after this, apply. This was very helpful.

language preparation

My level of English was sufficient before I left to Madrid. This was most important because I followed all of my courses in English. For daily life a basic level of Spanish appeared to be very handy but also not necessary. I studied some Spanish at home through books and apps but not a lot. I would have put more effort in this because a basic level of Spanish comes in very handy to have a sufficient level of Spanish at the end of the period.

finances

I have saved some money and I used the Erasmus grant. Relative to the rest of Spain Madrid is quite expensive. I paid 500 euro for my room and groceries are about the same price as in the Netherlands. On the other hand, public transport is very cheap

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)



I followed all of my courses at the economics and business faculty. The university makes it possible to apply for two courses maximum outside of your faculty. As I described above, I decided to choose these courses based on the orient week. What you have filled in on your learning agreement does not really matter when you arrive. You can follow any course you want for a week and then you need to apply to the course. This is very important because some courses are impossible if you do not have a sufficient background.

academic quality of education activities

The academic quality was okay. The classes are less interactive, and it often happens that the teacher constantly talked and the student was just quiet for two hours. The exams are very different from the ones you will get in the Netherlands, so I needed to get used to this. Also, there are a lot of continuous assessments which are most of the time 40% of your final grade. Also the exams were far more difficult than expected.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

The counselling & support at Complutense was fine. Beforehand, they replied to my e-mails very quickly and helpfully. However, when I arrived the office appeared to be open very few hours a day and the personal did not speak English. Also everything you needed to arrange something, there was a very big waiting time.

transfer of credits

In process

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

The orientation program of the university itself was okay. There was one from the whole university and one from the faculty. The director of the university held a speech about the university. This would have been fine as it were in English, which it was not. I did not understand anything because of this. The introduction of the faculty was on the other hand in English. This was not that much fun but very informational.

There is also a organisation connected to the university: ESN. They offer many activities, trips etc. When you first arrive, this can be very helpful to meet some people.

accommodation

I found my place through Uniplaces. I lived in Lavapiés and paid 500 euros a month. This was average for Madrid. Lavapiés is quite nice because of the many restaurants and nice places. But it was still a 10 minute walk from the city center. Other nice neighbourhoods I very much recommend are: Malasaña, la Latina, plaza de España. These are both neighbourhoods closer to the city center, but still with some character and nice bars and restaurants. Try to live in the city and not too close to the university because the university (especially my faculty) is really far away.

leisure & culture

In Madrid you will never get bored of things to do. It is a very large city and when I go back there I still have things I can do. There are a lot of museums, nice restaurants and because Madrid is quite in the center, it is easy to visit other places outside of Madrid as well. Because Madrid is really in the center of Spain. Museums are free of charge of students.

The night life in Madrid is very good. There are a lot of large clubs but also small bars. Downside is that it is quite expensive.

suggestions/tips

- Look for room in the city center and not university



- Pay attention that the room you want to rent has windows.
- Make an appointment for your public transport card through 'citylife Madrid'. Because otherwise it can take a week to arrange an appointment

CONCLUSIONS

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

I would definitely recommend to go to Madrid for your time abroad. It is a very international and alive city which offers something for everyone.

The university is definitely not as good as in the Netherlands. Some things are just done very differently and therefore the information and tests given are sometimes hard to understand. There are a lot of small assignments and there is a lot of control. But it was still really interesting to study at such a big university as Complutense. It has a lot of students from all over the world. This was a great experience. The Spanish students are also really open here. Also, it is interesting how classes can be given so differently in another country

do you have any additional advice or comments?

If you are interested in different cultures, people, language and living in a large city. Definitely go to Madrid. If you are more interested in studying, I would not recommend Madrid.