



Exchange Report

THE BASICS

Your first name: [Eric](#)

Your email address: lucy_eh@hotmail.com

Your partner university: [University of Maastricht](#)

Your UVic major during the exchange: [Psychology](#)

UVic session(s) during which you did your exchange: [Fall 2006](#)

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GENERAL EVALUATION

Please rate your overall exchange experience on a scale of 1 to 5 (5 is the best rating):

Rating: [4.5](#)

Comments: [Very beautiful city that is central to many European countries, although the course work is quite heavy and there is lots of reading to accomplish during the term. Word of warning for those who want to travel lots because there is only one final usually and your whole grade is determined on it while you are expected to keep up the readings for the term. But PBL is very interesting and allows for much interaction and allows to get to know other students.](#)

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ARRIVAL

How satisfied were you with your experience of arriving in your host country or city? Please rate on a scale of 1 to 5 (5 is the best rating):

Rating: [3](#)

Comments: [There was a program for arriving students but I arrived one day to late and had to walk around the city with all of my baggage, while getting the wrong directions from other UM faculties.](#)

What assistance, if any, did you receive when you arrived at your exchange destination?

[I arrived to late to take advantage of the program but there was a ESN program to pick up students and there was a driver that was arranged to drop me off to my location.](#)

How difficult was it for you to obtain your travel documents (visa, etc.)?

[Very easy the International office arranges a meeting with the Residence Permit office although you do have to wait in for your number to get the permit, it was overall a very easy process.](#)

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ORIENTATION AND ASSISTANCE

How satisfied were you with the orientation and assistance available to students at your partner university?

Please rate on a scale of 1 to 5 (5 is the best rating):

Rating: [4](#)

Comments: [The International office was quite helpful in orientation. They provided a buddy matching program](#)



although my buddy was not very helpful the office made themselves very accessible and made every effort to help exchange students with any problems they faced. There was also a PBL training course at the beginning of the whole exchange and this help somewhat to prepare and to know what to expect.

How easy was it to find information you needed to know right away? Very the office usually had someone inside even outside of the office hours and were very helpful

What help did you receive from the international staff or office? We received a package with courses, instruction on webmail and other online source, our student cards, translations of often seen words, etc.

What was your impression of the international staff or office?
Very helpful and genuinely concerned

What was the orientation like at your partner university, if there was one, and how well did it suit your needs? There was a brief orientation of the campus that allowed us to see where things were located not sufficient, but there was an introductory camping trip that was provided for exchange students and was very helpful in getting to know the Dutch students

What was it like to adjust to the culture of your exchange site and were there people you could talk to about what you were experiencing?

The camping trip was very helpful in integrating into the culture. The majority of the people were from Holland and it was a great way to meet people and its were I started many of my friendships during the exchange. The International office was very available to talk about the experience and even organized a meeting for us to talk about our concerns during the exchange.

HOUSING

How satisfied were you with the housing available to students? Please rate on a scale of 1 to 5 (5 is the best rating):

Rating: 5

Comments: Very International, people from all over, I lived outside the Main Guesthouse (Main Guesthouse is like Res at Uvic but only International students live there and its actually shared with a hospital, Mine was Majellastraat) and was very worth it although it was far from town but close to the school, but using a bike made everything asscesible.

How early could students move in to housing at the beginning of term? Not sure

What options were available for meal plans or cooking facilities? There is no plan but you can put money on your Dutch bank card towards using at the University cafeteria. The cooking facilities were a stove and microwave

How satisfied were you with the food? The C1000 (Grocery store) is one minute was and there is also a weekly produce market very close by

How close are the residences to the university? 5 minute bike ride

Could students stay in the residences during major holidays? Yes

Which residence would you recommend to UVic students? Majellastraat but the Main Guesthouse if you want

to meet lots of people and don't mind always having people around.

If you lived in off-campus housing, how easy was it to find? All housing is generally off campus, but outside of the university housing is difficult because you need to register with Kamerburo and they give seniority to those who have been members longest, but I think its possible just not easy

What should future UVic exchange students know about living off-campus? Very hard to find a place I was told but its not impossible. From what I understand most places that are off campus are not fully furnished but not sure.

COURSE REGISTRATION

How satisfied were you with the registration process at your partner university? Please rate on a scale of 1 to 5 (5 is the best rating):

Rating: 2

Comments:

Was very confusing because I was one of the first students to register but eventually after much emailing I figured out how it works. If you are a psychology student you can only take psychology courses except for Dutch Language and Culture course. There are two periods within a semester and you can take two courses per period. There are designated A and B courses in each period and must ensure, even if they are from different years, that you take one A and one B course.

Please describe the registration process at your partner university.

See above

What kind of help was available? Very difficult because they did not explain everything properly and were did not make clear that I could not take courses outside of Psychology

How successful were you in registering for classes you wanted?

I was not successful because I needed to have a Social Science requirement met but ended up making arrangements at Uvic, it was also difficult to work around the A and B scheme because some courses were not in English and some I had already taken at Uvic so limited selection.

What advice would you offer to next year's exchange students about registration at your partner university?

Be prepared to only take psychology courses and to make sure that you know for sure that you will be able to have courses that you have not taken at Uvic

ACADEMICS

How satisfied were you with the academic program at your partner university? Please rate on a scale of 1 to 5 (5 is the best rating):

Rating: 4

Comments: The PBL is very innovative and makes it interesting and was able to learn a lot but there is a lot of reading that you really have to do and most are scientific papers in later years. The testing was very poor because they use a system where you really on others to give you information (impossible to read all articles) and if others do not provide you with the necessary information it can still be on the test. There is usually only one test for each class and comprises 100 percent of your mark, another down side. I enjoyed the process of

PBL lots of interaction and active participation but poor testing methods

How did the style of teaching at your partner university compare with that at UVic?

Very different there is tutor that is only present to guide student learning most learning is done in small groups and you must be prepared or else you cannot contribute. There are lectures as well but the main parts are the group work.

How did the workload compare to what you would expect at UVic?

Very heavy, more reading then I expected it can be very annoying because every week there are different problems needing solving and sometimes the problems do not necessarily interest you but you still must be prepared for the group

How many courses did you take in your first term abroad?

I took one course in the first period and two in the second

Your second term?

What would you recommend as an appropriate course load for other UVic students visiting your partner university?

One course per period is recommended for those who plan on doing traveling and meeting lots of people, however it is up to you if you can handle two courses I found it very difficult to manage two because I was traveling and participating in other social activities, with one course I also had almost too much time on my hands but did lots of traveling

What specific courses would you recommend to visiting UVic students?

From the ones I took:

Decision Making – Very interesting at times and practical to life but not always clear and structured until the very end when everything tied together, teacher was very nice and approachable

Learning – Very boring class and was not worth taking at all, avoid at all cost, teacher was very inconsiderate and did not explain things very clearly

Sensation and Perception – Interesting course worth taking but the testing was a real draw back Multiple Guess but need to designate 10 that are not answered then they mark still out of fifty even if you do not answer 10 questions, was poorly explained

Why?

See above

If you studied in a non-English speaking country, what was the availability of courses offered in English?

Was somewhat limited but system does not give option to many different psychology courses.

What advice would you give UVic students about succeeding academically at your partner university?

Be prepared for all Group meetings and if you plan on doing lots of traveling only take one course per period

What was your impression of the computer facilities, library, and internet access at your partner university?

Very good although the printing process was difficult because you need to have a Dutch bank card with Chipnik as they call it

What electronic devices would you recommend a UVic student bring (laptop, PDA, etc.)? Laptop is useful but not necessary, camera and music to get through the homesick times



COSTS

Please indicate currency: **Euros - 1 Euro is roughly 1.4 Canadian**

Books - per term: **0-100 Euros Not all courses require text books**

Accommodation - per month: **350 Euro**

Meals - per month: **160 Euro**

Local transportation - per month: **Bike is the only way to go 40-70 Euro**

Health insurance - per term: **Not sure but I got travel cuts for 6 months at 300 Canadian**

Personal spending - per term: **Depends but 500-1500 per month**

Communications (phone, etc.) - per term: **Used phone: 50 Euro Prepaid plan: 20-40 Euro per month**

Other university related fees - per term: **450 Euro Residence permit!**

EXTRA-CURRICULAR/SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

How satisfied were you with the out-of-class opportunities at your exchange site? Please rate on a scale of 1 to 5 (5 is the best rating):

Rating: **5**

Comments: **After the camping trip I made many Dutch friends and they invited me to take part in a club called the A-cie (party planning) was one of the best experiences, got to know many cool people and get to really know the night life of the city, was very cool because it was the first time they had taken an exchange student in and they all spoke English just so that I could understand the weekly dinner meetings that we had, I was also offered to write an article about my exchange experience in the bi yearly magazine for the university of Maastricht which was a very cool experience, there is a very cheap rec center beside the Psychology faculty with a huge variety of sports activities, arts, etc.**

What organized activities (clubs, sports, etc.) were available to students?

Many but just need to know where to look a good place was the social guide that I found in the Cultural Studies faculty but need to get organized early sometimes hard when arriving and dealing with other issues

What extra-curricular activities would you recommend to future exchange students?

If you go to the Intro camping called Fik-cie. Very fun time and a good way to meet tons of people from Holland and Germany, there are also many sporting activities that are good to attend to also meet people and the ESN intro week is very fun and worthwhile to meet other exchange students

What do you recommend other visiting students see or do on their weekends or holidays?

Maastricht is dead during the weekends because strangely most people go back home to work or see there friends from back home. I would recommend to travel almost every weekend because there are so many countries that are nearby

What opportunities were there for students to work on-campus?

I didn't try to work but it seemed difficult, not completely sure though

Off-campus?

Above

What volunteer or internship opportunities were there for students?

There are some AISEC has volunteering and internship opportunities, also with the A-cie we organized a party

to raise money for construction of a hospital in Ghana was very worthwhile

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SAFETY AND HEALTH

How safe did you feel at your exchange site? Please rate on a scale of 1 to 5 (5 is the best rating):

Rating: 4.5

Comments No one wears helmets while biking but not too dangerous just have to learn the rules of the road, very safe town though there is hardly any crime

What are the biggest safety concerns for future exchange students going to your exchange site? Bike helmets while biking

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PERSONAL AND CULTURAL CONNECTIONS

What was it like making friends?

Very easy to meet class mates because of the interaction in PBL and if you live in the Main Guesthouse there are many people around, also in Majellastraat where I lived we had a small but very close group of exchange students, the camping trip made it much easier to make friends from Holland

How successful were you at making friends with local (i.e., not international) students?

I would say very because I hung out with many friends from the A-cie

What was it like to adjust to the culture of your exchange site?

Was not very hard most people in Holland speak very good English which makes it easy adjust, other exchange students are helpful too

What, if any, cultural differences did you find particularly challenging?

Learning biking rules of the road, is very difficult to learn the Dutch Language because as soon as they know you speak English they will start speaking to you in English

What parts of the culture did you most appreciate?

Learning a difficult language, tasting the different selections of food and beers especially from Belgium, the funny Dutch sense of humor which actually is similar to the Canadians

How were you treated by local people? By university staff and faculty? By students?

Locals are not the friendliest but obviously not everybody is the same, the staff is very friendly and made every effort to accommodate us, students were very friendly and took me in very well, exchange students were great as well

As far as you could tell, how easy would it be for students with disabilities to study at your partner university?

I would say hard because the campuses and housing is spread out and there are many cobblestone streets

For students who are visible minorities in your host country?

Would be easier than above but again the distances would be hard to manage

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TAKING STOCK

What are the three most important things for students to take with them when they go to your host country or

region?

Bring a Eurail Selectpass, was one of the handiest things I bought 10 days of unlimited travel within two month span, I almost had a hard time use up all the days

Good attitude, be prepared to be challenged by the PBL at first but if you stick it out you can learn a lot, and it can provide you with confidence for speaking in public

Camera, catch all the cool people you meet and the amazing places you go on camera it will be great when you miss the city that you lived in

What are the three most important things you would tell a UVic student who is going to your partner university on exchange?

Be prepared to put yourself out there to meet people from the country because it is a very cool experience to hang out with people from the host country as well as the exchange students. It takes some effort to get out of the exchange environment but is fully worth it, try hard to learn some of language people totally appreciate hearing someone trying to learn their language

I stayed for one semester but I would have liked to stay longer, I made good friends and had to say goodbye too soon. If it is possible stay for two semesters

Remember that an exchange is not only to get credits but also to see another culture and learn things outside of the class room.

Is there any other information that you think might prove useful to UVic exchange students attending your host university?

What was the most rewarding part of your exchange experience?

Being a part of the Social Committee A-cie, hanging out with/really getting to know lots of Dutch students and writing an article for the University of Maastricht University

What was your greatest challenge on the exchange?

Learning how to manage the PBL and getting used to different learning style at the school

How has your perspective changed as a result of the exchange?

It has given me lots of confidence in my abilities to get things done and also have a lot more confidence in my abilities in public speaking due to the PBL style of learning. Was also able to get know a lot of people from different countries and learn lots about there respective cultures

What else do you want to say about your exchange experience?

An exchange is a very unique experience where you can go to another country and be very immersed into a culture and also meet lots of people from all over the world. Mine was very rewarding and allowed be to gain confidence in myself and my abilities. I would recommend to anyone to go on an exchange.

