



Student Exchange Program

International Student Services

Exchange Final Report

Student Information

Faculty at UVic Social Sciences
Major/Minor Biology and Psychology Combined Major
Host University University of Utrecht
Host Country Netherlands
Dates of Exchange September-December

Overall Exchange Experience

Please Rate your Overall Exchange Experience

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

What was the most rewarding part of your exchange experience? Please outline any highlights.

Meeting a lot of people and making a ton of friends quickly was extremely rewarding! Also taking the time to travel around Europe (Germany, Spain, Hungary) was logistically challenging but a very worthwhile experience.

What was the greatest challenge during your exchange?

Dealing with online school and the various COVID restrictions. I found that exclusively having online courses made finding connections much more of a challenge than it should have been. Additionally, restrictions started to be put in place where businesses were shutdown in the afternoon making it harder to maintain the connections that I had already gained. We still found ways to have fun regardless of the lockdowns but it still made for some moments of isolation and monotony.

Travel

Cost of air travel \$2,300 round trip

Cost of ground transportation (ex. monthly bus pass) 15 Euro per month to rent a bike.

Did host university representatives meet you at the airport? No

Is there easy transportation between the airport and university? Yes

Orientation

Is there an organized orientation session upon arrival?

Yes, there were various faculty and exchange student orientations. I met some of my best friends during these orientations and would encourage anyone to participate if studying in Utrecht.

How easy was it to find the info you needed to know upon arrival?

The specifics of the orientation were initially very confusing. However, I did get an email detailing how to check in to my dorm but none of my roommates were informed that the kitchen did not include any cooking supplies or utensils.

I did receive emails checking up on how my class registration was going and they were helpful in sorting out changes to my academic schedule.

What assistance did you receive from your host institution upon arrival?

Accommodation

Is on-campus accommodation available? Yes

If yes, did you live on campus? Yes

Would you recommend this to future students? Yes

If you lived off-campus, how did you find housing?

n/a

Approximately how much money would you budget per month for living, including accommodation and meals?

Not including the rent, I budgeted about \$1000 per month for meals, restaurants etc. But I did take the time to go to concerts, visit museums and travel around so it is totally possible to live with a cheaper budget

Language Programs

Is there a language program available either before or during the semester?

There were some free introductory Dutch language courses

Is there an additional cost for the language training?

No

Academics

Was it possible for you to get all the courses that you wanted?

Yes

Please describe the course registration process

First, we ranked our desired courses. We then registered for the courses on the online portal (OSIRIS). I ended up getting enrolled in all the courses I had ranked.

All three were taught online. All except for one were asynchronous. Due to the courses being in a smaller time frame (6 weeks) I found the work to be a little more stressful compared to UVic. But I also found that spending so much intense time with the material allowed me to learn and understand the material in a deeper way than I usually do.

Describe the manner and quality of instruction at your host university

Prior to the exchange I had not written or spent a lot of time with psychology research. Here, the department encourages the students to get familiar with current research and to propose new studies in the field. I found this kind of approach extremely valuable and applicable for someone looking to do a masters of psychology.

What do you feel is the greatest academic benefit you have gained personally from your exchange?

Personal and Cultural Connections

How easy was it to adjust to the local culture? What (if any) cultural differences did you find particularly challenging? What parts of the culture did you most appreciate?

Here biking is absolutely a way of life and essential for getting around. I would highly recommend renting a bike (from swapfiets) as it will make getting around the city and getting groceries much easier. Culturally, the dutch people do tend to be straight forward and honest people but I didn't feel it was challenging to be accepted in the culture. Most of all I appreciate how happy most people are here and everyone seemed to take an interest in each other's lives.

The campus has a gym called Olympus that I would highly recommend for those looking to stay fit during their exchange. There are also plenty of recreational sports teams to join. I played on the ultimate frisbee team here (UTKA) which was a great way have fun and meet local students!

The ESN and buddy-go-dutch organizations offered many programs throughout the semester for meeting up with other exchange students.

However, most of my social events were going out for drinks with friends or the occasional house party. For me I found that meeting friends during the first few weeks of orientation made it easy to find a group of people to hang out with during the rest of the semester.

What kinds of cultural, athletic and social activities were available for students at your host institution?