

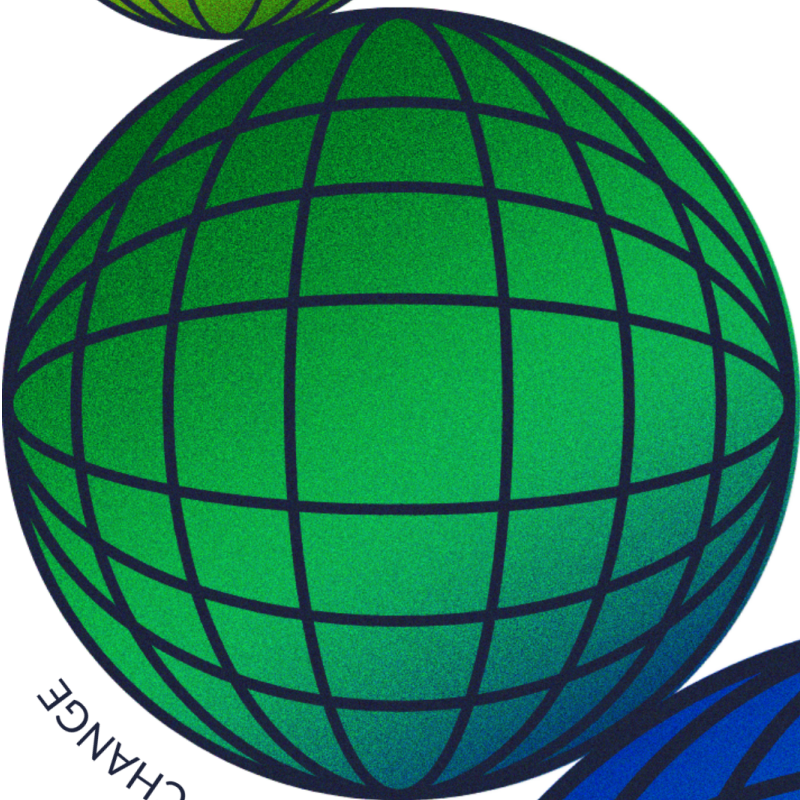
DECEMBER 2020

a BOOKLET about **EXCHANGES.**

Texts: Veronica Zanon, Noor Vissram,
Antoon Versies

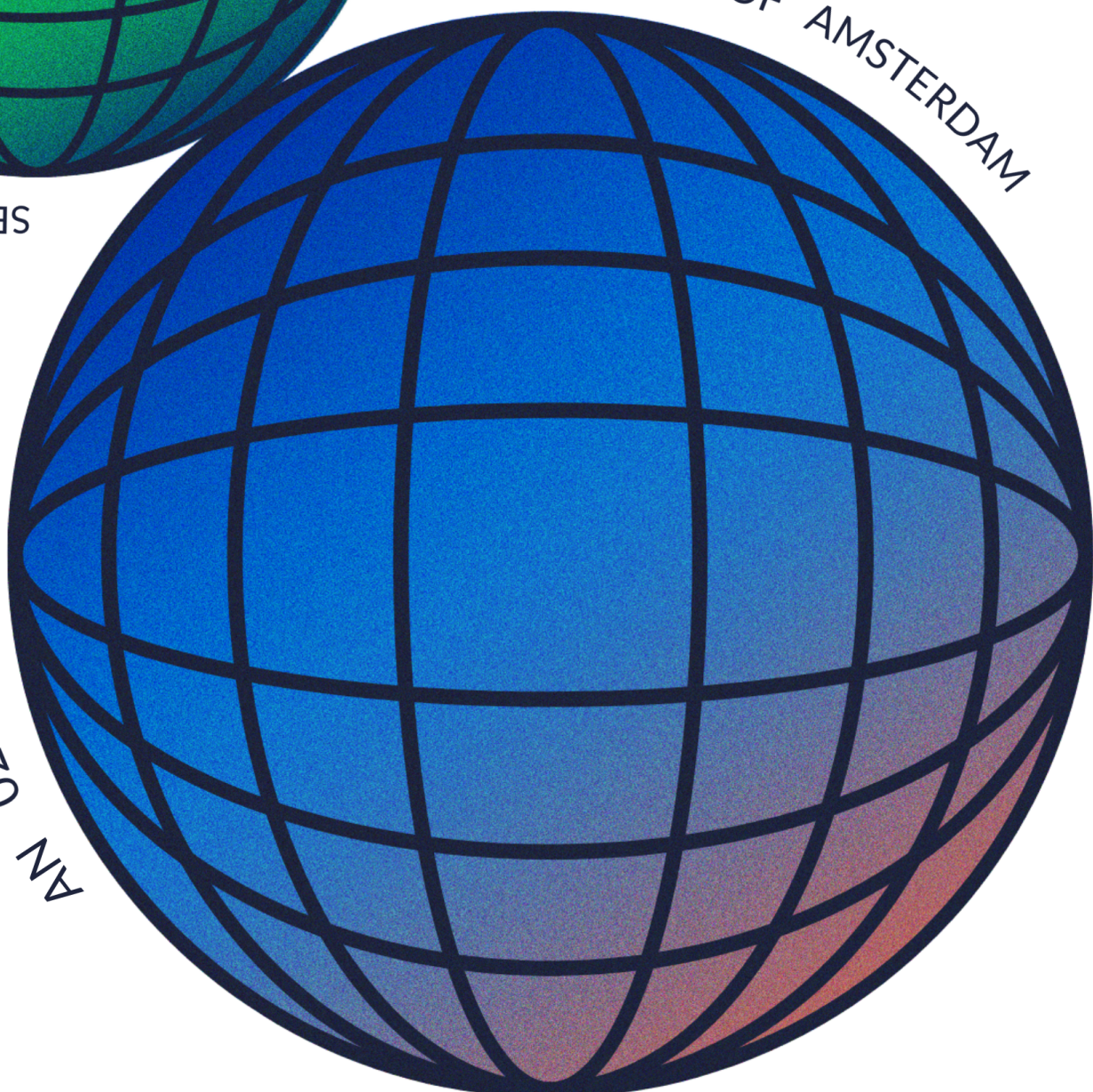
Edit: Mia Haug

Design: Dédé Kruisman



SEE THE CHANGE

UNIVERSITY OF AMSTERDAM



AN O2O INITIATIVE



Welcoming Message.

For many students, the most stressful and exciting part of their academic programme revolves around studying abroad, away from their usual environment. Exchanges allow learning from different cultures and perspectives while experiencing a wholly different academic setting. It is for many students one of the most unforgettable moments in their life.

It is therefore that we at 020 decided to give you the necessary information in order for you to hand in a high-quality application for the destination you want to go to.

In this booklet, one of the 020 members who has succeeded in two highly competitive exchanges gives an in-depth understanding of the tips and tricks to ensure that your application procedure goes as smoothly as possible. Furthermore, this booklet is full of important information and practicalities that will make your exchange and procedure of going there more comfortable.

We would love to receive any inquiries and feedback through our Instagram (020.nl), contact@020together.nl or www.0-2-0.nl.

Your 020 team

Table of Contents.

Why Should You Go on Exchange?	3	Procedure	7
Facts and Numbers	4	Good to Know Before You Go	12
Types of Exchanges	5	Conclusion	15

Why Should You Go on Exchange?

Going on an exchange programme is perhaps one of the most exciting and eye-opening experiences a student can experience during their academic journey. Although many students studying at UvA may already have come to the Netherlands to study abroad, an exchange programme nevertheless gives the opportunity to experience life and culture in a completely different context from one's own.

There are many reasons why a student may choose to pursue an exchange and perhaps the most important of these is the fact that an exchange gives the opportunity to see, live and experience a different way of living. Through studying abroad, one is able to fully immerse oneself in a culture, learn of the traditions and customs of a particular country, and live like the locals. You will be able to meet people who have had very different life experiences from your own, or who see things in a

different perspective which you have never thought about before. Studying abroad also gives you the opportunity of experiencing a different form of education, with different teaching methods and foreign professors. You may also be able to venture into things which you may not otherwise have been able to in the Netherlands, such as the pursuit of new interests or hobbies local to the country you are living in, or even learning the language of the country you are studying in. Lastly, an exchange provides you with the possibility of gaining new life long friendships and relationships, which will not only improve your personal social life but will further promote the opportunity for networking and connections in your future professional career.

It is therefore easy to see how an exchange programme could benefit you as a student, not only in the means of personal and cultural development but also in regards to your education and the possibility of networking and expanding your web of contacts and relationships.

Facts and Numbers.

All students applying for an exchange programme must meet certain requirements to be eligible for the application. First, you must have completed two years of your bachelor's degree successfully (meaning you have sufficient ECs for those two years). However, having sufficient ECs is not enough, you must also have a high enough average, corresponding to a 3.0 GPA (American grading system), which in the Dutch grading system would be around an average of a 7.0.

When going on an exchange programme, you are applying to complete a semester elsewhere, while still being a student at the UvA. This means that you will still be studying as a UvA student and therefore have to complete some requirements in your education while abroad. While on an exchange, you will need to register in enough classes that will give you a minimum of 30 ECs in total by the end of the semester

as a requirement to pass the semester and receive the exchange completion. As you are going on exchange as a UvA student, you will not need to pay tuition to your partner university, but will instead pay your regular tuition fees for the UvA.

In terms of deadlines, there are three rounds of applications. The first two rounds are for either the first or second semester (or an entire year if you choose to), the third round is only for taking part in global exchange in the second semester. Each programme has different deadlines as follows:

- Global Exchange Programme:
 - Round 1: 1st of December
 - Round 2: 15th of January
 - Round 3 (second semester): 15th of June
- Erasmus Programme:
 - Round 1: 1st of March
 - Round 2 (second semester): 15th of June

Types of Exchanges.

As a student at the UvA, you are given the choice between two types of exchange programmes: the Erasmus programme that is Europe-focused and the Global Exchange programme. Although there are some differences in terms of applications and where you can go/what you will study between the two, a lot of the procedure towards applying is similar.

The Erasmus programme is done on a faculty level and the destinations for this are mostly within Europe. Being on a faculty level means that each faculty at the UvA has agreements with different universities and that the semester you are taking abroad will be tailored towards the bachelor's degree you are taking at the UvA. This also means that the entry requirements may be different for each faculty and each partner university you can apply to, so it is important that you check the particular requirements for each partner university you are

interested in! The general requirements for all faculties are that you have completed two years of your bachelor's degree at your faculty and have a GPA of 3.0 in the American grading system (7.0 equivalent in the Dutch grading system), however, grade requirements might again differ per faculty and partner university. As part of the Erasmus programme you can also apply for an internship abroad instead of continuing in a study programme, again this varies between faculties and courses.

By enrolling in the Erasmus programme, you can participate in exchange programmes for the duration of a minimum of 3 months and maximum of 12 months and can be given a grant by the programme for additional living costs. In terms of tuition, you will be paying your normal tuition to the UvA as you are going on exchange as a UvA student, however, living costs vary from country to country and so the Erasmus programme is ready to give students aid for this. The

amount you are given for the grant again differs depending mostly on what country you are going to for your exchange and their average standard of living cost.

The Global Exchange Programme offers you the opportunity to study abroad outside of Europe and, unlike the Erasmus Programme, is not done through a faculty level. This means that you will apply to a partner university and not a specific faculty in that university. It also means that you can take courses from a different faculty than your Bachelor's course at the UvA, provided that you meet the specific requirements for each course. Similar to the Erasmus programme, you will need to have a Dutch equivalent to a 3.0 GPA to be eligible for the global exchange and, again, these may differ from university to university. You are not obliged to apply for courses within your bachelor's, however, you do have to apply to take courses within your faculty. This means that if you are enrolled at the Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences for example,

then when applying for the global exchange you will choose courses within that faculty (ie. Psychology, Sociology, Anthropology, Political Science, etc.). Although most courses you register for should be within your faculty, you are still allowed to take one to two courses outside of the faculty, provided there is availability and compatibility in terms of ECs, of course.

The same documents are required by both programmes. These include first and foremost your application form which is perhaps the most important document. You will also need to ask for academic transcripts from your entire university career so far at the UvA, including transcripts from other universities that you have attended before the UvA (if applicable). This will be crucial for the GPA requirements and to see whether or not you are academically eligible for the university and programme you are applying to. Apart from your form and academic transcripts, you will need to send in a Curriculum Vitae

(CV). This is perhaps the document (besides your form of course) that will make your application, as it is where you can show the partner university how exactly you stand out from other students in a non-academic way and also what experience you have had that might convince them that you are an asset to their university and compatible with the programme. For the Global Exchange, if you are a non-native English speaker or did not have an international background in education (such as the International Baccalaureate), you will also have to send proof of an English proficiency test such as the TOEFL.

Procedure.

Step 1: Look at Destinations

The first important step you need to take before starting the procedure is finding a destination that suits your interests. To find which universities you can go to, you need to visit the website wereldkaart-uva.nl and indicate the course you are currently

enrolled at the University of Amsterdam. Once you delineate the different formalities, a map will appear with many destinations to choose from. However, make sure to read again who exactly is eligible to apply, since sometimes universities only accept specific courses.

Another important element is to consider the competition levels of the various universities. In general, there is high competition for well-established universities, such as NYU, the National University of Singapore, or Beijing University (to name a few). It implies that many students apply, while there are only limited spots available. Moreover, these types of universities usually require a GPA of 7 or higher to enter. If you press a specific university on the UvA World Map, you should be able to see the number of applicants and the available spots and the required GPA (if any). Since you can only apply for one university per application round, we would highly recommend taking the competitiveness into

account, since the most popular universities and destinations will already be fully booked after the first round. Nevertheless, if you feel confident about the strength of your application and motivation, you should not hesitate to apply for the university you wish to attend.

Our final recommendation before applying to your preferred university is to look at the practicalities of the place already. Sometimes students apply for exchange to experience a different culture, rather than going there specifically for the university. However, this experience might turn out to be disappointing if you only find out after the acceptance letter that the courses they offer do not suit your interest. Looking at what exactly the university has to offer is thus extremely important. Furthermore, it will always be in your benefit to go to a place that is relevant for the classes you want to take.

After you take all the costs and benefits into account and decide

which university you would like to go on exchange, the formal application procedure starts. This procedure is undoubtedly the most important part of the application since the Exchange Coordinators will base their decision on everything that they received in the application. Therefore, we highly encourage you to start applying as soon as you can, so you have time to revise and possibly rewrite certain parts of your application.

Step 2: Get Those Documents

The application procedure takes more time than you want. This is because you are not doing your application by yourself: for many universities you will need to provide one, but in most cases two recommendation letters. Ideally, these recommendation letters come from professors or tutors who know you and your academic capabilities best within the University of Amsterdam. Since many staff members within the UvA have a packed schedule, we recommend you to immediately

write an email to ask them to establish a recommendation letter. Make sure that when you write this letter, you explain the practicalities: which university, when you would like to go, and maybe some elements you would like the professor to include.

While you are waiting for these recommendation letters, there are two other steps you need to take that involve the UvA: receiving your transcript and the academic approval paper. The quickest way to receive your transcript is by physically going to the Student Service Desk with your student number. Usually, they will provide your transcript within minutes. Concerning the academic approval paper, you will need to print out this document and get it signed by the study adviser. Make sure that you print the document concerning the right faculty.

The last document you will need when applying is your passport. In many countries, your passport must be valid for over six months after you leave. It is therefore important that you check whether

your passport will still be valid for quite some time. If this is not the case, you should apply for a new passport as soon as possible, since this procedure can also take some time.

Step 3: Start Writing

Whereas gathering the documents is mainly for the formalities, it is the motivation letter and CV (besides your GPA) that mostly will make or break your application. Two main points must be mentioned before going into each section: first, we recommend you to start writing as early as possible, so you can elaborate on what exactly you want to include in the application. The second point is that we highly encourage you to let other students, professors, or family members revise your application form since they might notice elements that should (not) be included in the application.

Curriculum Vitae

Concerning your CV, it is important to use the template that is offered by the UvA and not

make your own design. An important part of your CV is that, besides your extracurricular activities, intracurricular activities are extremely beneficial. Therefore, we recommend you to engage with study associations, enrol in the Honours Programme, or have a specific function within the UvA, such as being a buddy for the Intreewee. Furthermore, extracurricular activities are certainly worth mentioning when you will use them in your motivation letter. We will come back to this soon.

If you are a student who has quite some elements to write down, we would advise you to implement the most important elements that would make your CV better than others. This is for two main reasons: first, a concise CV is clearer for the board to read and judge the application. A CV that is too long with many details is not appealing, and therefore should be avoided. The second reason is that the CV template is rather short, and therefore forces students to highlight the most

crucial aspects of their CV, rather than everything that can be written down.

Motivation Letter

After constructing your CV, students should start writing their motivation letter. In this motivation letter, you will get a limited amount of characters (not words!) to answer the questions provided to you. It is therefore necessary to keep certain tips and tricks in mind.

First, it is important to substantiate your CV through the questions asked. If, for example, you state that you are a very curious person, you need to justify why exactly you are curious. By justifying your traits and characteristics, those who read your application gain a better understanding of you as a person. The motivation letter is partly for you to further elaborate and explain what is written down in your CV. Therefore, it is best to go deeper into a couple of elements, rather than mentioning many different elements but leaving it untouched.

In the motivation letter, we also advise you to keep your destination and university in mind. Why is it exactly this university that will be good for your academic career? Is it because you want to challenge yourself in a different academic context? Or are you perhaps curious to know their culture? How is this university going to help you in your academic and professional career? These are highly specific questions that the judges want to know. A standard motivation letter that does not touch on your specific destination seems rather uninterested and should be avoided at all costs.

The last tip we give that should be taken into account revolves around originality. You will see that many of the questions they ask in your motivation letter seem to overlap in some ways. However, they are quite different if you analyze them. Giving highly similar answers to different questions limits your ability to show the various reasons you want to go on an exchange. Try to

stick to the most important topic of the question and really try to go into that specific subject, rather than reiterating yourself in various questions. For example, if you state which classes would be really useful for you at your desired university, they will see you already did proper research about the place you want to go to.

Rejected. What now?

Unfortunately, not everybody gets accepted from the first try. That's why we recommend you to apply before the first deadline. This way, you get more time to think and improve your application in case your first one received a rejection.

The positive part about a first-round rejection is that the committee who reviewed your application will justify why they did not accept your application. Their reasons can be manifold: it can be that there is simply too much competition, other times there was an incomplete document in your application, but sometimes there are some elements in your CV or motivation

letter that can use some improvement. Each part of your application (GPA, CV, and motivation letter) gets a score. Those who pass the first round will not know their score, but those who got rejected will receive the score they received on each section. They will provide you with in-depth criticism and tips on how to improve your score. It, therefore, helps you not only to create a better exchange application but also to improve your general writing and application skills for future purposes.

Good to Know Before You Go.

There are some practical matters that you need to take into consideration before deciding to pursue a study abroad. Although they may not be considered in your application for the exchange university, these factors are very important in understanding how realistic in different universities is for you. These are just some tips, but they are extremely important

to be taken into account when deciding to go on an exchange programme. For more information, please visit [the UvA website](#).

Take Finances into Account

Studying abroad may be more expensive for you than studying at UvA, due to different fees or costs of living. You should try your best to create a projected budget of how much living costs are in the host country of your choice, and really evaluate whether you are able to afford such an expense and whether it is suitable for you. Coming up with a budget may not be easy, as it sometimes depends on the student and country you are living in. Therefore, we recommend you check out the estimated fees the university gives in their description. The average monthly price of living in a particular destination is often also written at the exchange world map with each destination. If you are a Dutch speaker, check out [this brochure](#).

If you find that the expenses are too high for you to manage comfortably, there are several options you as a student may want to explore. For one, there are different types of grants provided by the UvA, the Dutch Government, and Private Grants and Scholarships. These include a vast variety of grants, concessions and scholarships, for which you as a student may be eligible, depending on the conditions set. It is strongly recommended that you take a look at these, and research what type might be most suitable for you, and how to achieve it.

It may also be a good idea for you to consider the idea of finding a part-time job in the host country you wish to study in, this might give you an opportunity to gain work experience, and extra money for you to continue your studies comfortably.

Legal Documents

Especially for the Global Exchange programmes (if you are an EU-resident), it is important to know what specific visa you will need

for the exchange, and how long beforehand you have to apply for it. Because exchanges usually last for one semester, the chances are high that you can't stay with a tourist visa, since these types of visas tend to expire within 3 months of arrival. To avoid unexpected situations, we recommend you to contact the embassy of your country in the country where you will go on exchange to ask all the specifics for the visa.

Another important document that you will need to have when arriving in your host country is a residence permit. Usually, you get between three and seven days to go to the municipality of the city you reside to gain a residence permit. If you do not do this in time, you get a chance of being fined. Therefore, we stress again the importance of looking up all these practicalities on the official website of the recipient country to avoid surprises when you live in your new place.

Language Requirements

Although it is common knowledge that the English language is the global language of choice, it might be wise to consider learning or perhaps at least acquiring the basic knowledge of the language spoken in your desired host country. This might encourage you to have less culture shock, and integrate better into the country's culture and social life.

There are a variety of courses both online and in-person to learn any desired language, however, it could be recommended that you take a look at “[Language Exchange Program](#)”, a network where students can learn and practice their desired language, on an exchange of knowledge basis, for example (one student teaches Italian in exchange for being taught Spanish).

It is also highly recommended that you take a look at the language tests or language requirements that are needed to go study at the university of your choice. There may, for example, be a need for

you to complete the IELTS or TOEFL exams. The best part: the UvA provides the opportunity for you to take these courses in your third year, free of charge. Check out [this link](#) to learn more about how you can take the IELTS exam through the UvA.

Accommodation

If you arrange your exchange study programme through the UvA, then accommodation is usually provided by the host university, however, if you are arranging your studies independently then it is possible that you must also arrange for your own accommodation or lodging. If that is the case, you should contact the institution you wish to study in, or visit [the Nuffic website](#) for more information on each case.

A great possibility and something students should possibly consider is the idea of subletting your room in Amsterdam to another exchange student coming to the UvA, for the duration of the semester. This is a great opportunity to earn some

extra money to finance your exchange study. You need to make sure that subletting is allowed for the room or apartment you are staying in through your landlord, as many rental apartments or student housing organisations do not allow them. You are able to sublet your room through the platform [HousingAnywhere](#) which is free if you use your UvA student email address to access it.

Partake in the UvA Fair

The UvA each year, organises a fair in which information about studying abroad is discussed both on a European level and Global one. Here you will be able to learn all the necessary information for you to travel, meet students who went on exchanges and hear their experiences, ask any questions or resolve any doubts you may have, and essentially learn more about the exchange programme you wish to undertake. It is also useful for students who wish to learn more about internships, or volunteer experiences abroad. The next

possible date for the study abroad fair should take place next year in 2021, and by July there will be more information on the precise focus of the event.

Conclusion.

We hope that this booklet provided you with sufficient and useful information for you to make your application procedure less stressful and more exciting. We do want to highlight that, especially for the application procedure, there is no golden formula in getting accepted wherever you apply. However, the tips and tricks mentioned do tend to be important and worth implementing into your application.

If you have any inquiries, or feel like something is missing in the Exchange Booklet, don't hesitate to contact us through [our website](#) or any of [our social media platforms](#).

All the best, and good luck with your application!

Your 020 Team