

Study Abroad Proposal

Proposal for Student Exchange Agreement: Vanderbilt University and Utrecht University (The Netherlands)

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I. Program Overview

- A. This proposal seeks an exchange agreement between the College of Arts & Science at Vanderbilt University and Utrecht University for a program entailing direct credit whereby A&S students can study during the Spring, Summer or full academic year and enroll in courses offered at Utrecht. (The fall semester at Utrecht ends in January which means that the fall-only semester is not an option for Vanderbilt students). Vanderbilt students in the College of Arts & Science would be permitted to take courses in the departments that correspond to the disciplines and departments within A&S. See Appendix 1A for a list of departments at Utrecht that correspond to Vanderbilt departments within the College of Arts & Science.
- B. Student exchange shall be on a one-to-one academic exchange basis with a maximum of four semester-long places or two year-long places available at each institution during each academic year. Each institution will submit to the other its students' applications for exchange by March 1st for Fall Semester exchange and by September 1st for Spring Semester exchange.
- C. The Exchange Program aims for a balance in the number of students exchanged over a three-year rolling average. If either university is unable to send the maximum number of exchange students for one semester of study in any year, then that university will be eligible to send additional exchange students, equal to the deficit, in the following year. The intention is that over three years, an equal number of student-semesters will be undertaken in each direction.

When one of the institutions has difficulty in matching the incoming students from the partner institution in any particular academic year, the institutions may accrue up to two semester-long places. Once the accrual limit has been reached by either institution no further student exchanges shall take place until the parties have consulted with one another and developed a written plan to achieve the intended balance.

II. Rationale

In March of 2009, Vanderbilt signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Utrecht University for cooperation in research and education. (See Appendix 3 for list of

existing collaborations between Vanderbilt and Utrecht). Proposed areas of cooperation in the MOU include an exchange of students. After signing the MOU, Utrecht University named Vanderbilt as one of its partner institutions. This process allows Vanderbilt students and faculty access to funding from Utrecht. In Summer 2009, Utrecht provided full scholarships to three Vanderbilt students to study at their institution.

Utrecht University is one of Europe's leading research universities, recognized internationally for its high-quality, innovative approach to both research and teaching. Utrecht is ranked as the top university in The Netherlands, 9th best in Europe, and 47th in the world by the 2008 Shanghai Academic Rankings. The Center for Higher Education Development rates Utrecht University's Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry and Biology research programs among the best in Europe. Utrecht is fully accredited and internationally evaluated as 'excellent' on 'level achieved' and 'quality of education' by a joint commission consisting of a council from QANU - an independent assessor of higher education programs in Holland - and delegates from the American Higher Learning Commission.

Currently, there are no study abroad options at Vanderbilt in The Netherlands and we have seen an increase in the number of students interested in programs in new European locations such as Copenhagen and Stockholm. Utrecht University would offer Vanderbilt students a unique and valuable academic exchange opportunity and provide students exposure to a different culture and educational system.

Utrecht is internationally-recognized for its excellence in research across many fields and offers a cross-disciplinary approach to research and teaching which is similar to Vanderbilt's. The University is particularly well-known for its strengths in the sciences and this is an area where Vanderbilt students are typically underrepresented in study abroad figures and one where we would like to increase our available options. The language barrier is often a deterrent to many students in science disciplines who want to study overseas. Utrecht offers over 200 courses in English every year which makes this an attractive option for our students. Utrecht has over 2000 international students each year and their International Office is responsible for exchange students. The International Office provides support and guidance in such issues as accommodations, language, and visa requirements. The Student Services Office resides within the International Office and is responsible for central registration and admission of students to university programs. Furthermore, it manages the international exchange programs and ensures and coordinates the information flow to students. Students with questions about registration for courses and programs, timetables, course catalogues, and counseling can contact the Student Services Office at any time. In addition to the International Office, each faculty/college is also provided with a support services department, which houses an Education and Student Office.

III. Selection & Nomination

- A. Selection of students to participate in the Exchange Program will be done by the home university, subject to final approval by the host university. Each student

must submit an application, in a form acceptable to the host institution, to participate in the Exchange Program. The two institutions agree that in the evaluation and admission of students for participation in the Exchange Program and in the administration of the Program, neither will discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, marital or parental status, national origin, age, veterans/national guard/reserves status or disability.

- B. Both universities will select students for the Exchange Program on the basis of merit and other non-discriminatory eligibility criteria as listed in Appendix 2A. The required supporting documents are listed in Appendix 2B.

The exchange student must meet the admission requirements of the host university and may have to fulfill other conditions, prerequisites and documentation for the host university. The exchange student will be nominated by the home university for admission as a non-degree seeking student of the host university in the following academic year.

- C. Each home university should complete its selection of exchange students and nominate its exchange students for the Exchange Program in the following academic year to the host university within a mutually agreeable, reasonable time frame. The exchange student's nomination should be accompanied by a:

1. curriculum vitae;
2. statement of academic aptitude from a member of the student's department; and
3. specific outline of the program of study at the host university.

The host university should evaluate the nominated exchange students and determine their acceptability for admission as exchange students by the end of April. The host university reserves the right to reject the home university's nominated exchange students. The home university may appeal the rejection.

- D. The exchange student will be registered as a full-time, non-degree seeking or non-graduating student for the duration of study at the host university.

IV. Program of Study

- A. The exchange students must propose a program of study at the host university. The modules or courses proposed must fulfill the exchange student's degree requirements at his or her home university. Both universities should, therefore, provide each other with material on the details of modules or courses available in the following academic year. The material of the host university should be regularly updated and accessible to the exchange students of the home university. The material may be placed in the host university's reference library and/or on the internet.

- B. The modules or courses must be self-contained and completed within the semester or term. For courses not taught in English on a regular basis the host university will make all possible efforts to offer complementary instruction in the English language, except where proficiency of another language is a prerequisite for a module or course. Academic counseling is the responsibility of the exchange student's faculty coordinator at the home university. An alternative module or course that will fulfill the degree requirements of the exchange student should be proposed if the original module or course is unavailable.

V. Home Institution's Obligations

Each Home Institution shall inform its participating students that:

1. Exchange students shall pay tuition and university fees to their home institution.
2. Exchange students shall be responsible for their own financial support including international transportation, accommodation, living expenses, and insurance. While exchange students shall be responsible for securing their own accommodation, assistance will be provided by the host institution in locating appropriate accommodation for exchange students.
3. Exchange students shall abide by the laws of the host country and the rules and regulations of the host institution. During the period of participation in the Exchange Program, all students will abide by the policies, rules, regulations and financial requirements in effect at the host institution. Consistent with the non-discrimination provisions of Section III (A) above, the host institution will have the right to undertake disciplinary proceedings, impose disciplinary sanctions or terminate the participation of any student in the Exchange Program and in any other program, service, or benefit at any time if the student's academic work or behavior is deemed not suitable in the judgment of the host institution. In the event disciplinary proceedings are initiated, sanctions are imposed, or termination is required, the institution taking such action(s) will promptly notify the other institution in writing of the cause and nature of the proceedings, sanctions or termination.
4. It is the responsibility of the exchange student to have obtained agreement from their home Faculty that upon successful completion of the subjects at the host institution, full credit will be granted towards the degree at their home institution.
5. Participation in an exchange under this agreement carries no expectation of subsequent transfer to the regular degree programs of the host university.

APPENDIX 1A

Utrecht University Departments corresponding to disciplines within the College of Arts & Science, Vanderbilt University

Undergraduate Departments & Programs at Utrecht University

(Courses are offered in English for exchange students)

Biology

Chemistry

Earth & Environmental Sciences

Economics

History & Art History

Mathematics

Physics & Astronomy

Media and Cultural Studies

Neuroscience

Philosophy

Psychology

Social Sciences

APPENDIX 1B

Structure of Academic Year

<u>SEMESTER/TERM</u>	<u>Vanderbilt University</u>	<u>Utrecht University</u>
Semester 1:	August to December	September to January
Semester 2:	January to May	February to July

APPENDIX 2A

Selection Criteria

The home university must ensure that the exchange student should:

- a. be registered as a full-time undergraduate or postgraduate of the home university and preferably be an eligible national (citizen or permanent resident) of the home university's country;
- b. have successfully completed at least:
 - i. one semester of study at the home university upon application for the exchange program; &
 - ii. two semesters of study upon admission to the host university;
- c. be a student of good standing at the home university with a minimum 'B' average grade or ranking in the top one-third of the class; and a minimum 'B' grade in the current/intended discipline/major;
- d. propose an appropriate program of study at the host university;
- e. show the aptitude, motivation and maturity, to thrive in the environment at the host university; and
- f. have sufficient funds for fees, personal and living expenses for the duration of the study abroad at the host university.

APPENDIX 2B

Supporting Documents and other Prerequisites

The Exchange Program shall be open to undergraduate students of each institution who have completed at least one year of full-time undergraduate study. Additionally, for any candidate whose native language is not English, the exchange student must score at least 100 on the Internet Based TOEFL (250 computer test) or 6.5 on the IELTS; TOEFL or IELTS scores must be included with application materials.

- a. Vanderbilt students applying for admission as an exchange student must submit to Utrecht University:
 - i. Application form;
 - ii. Documentary proof of nationality;
 - iii. Transcript of academic record; and
 - iv. Documentary proof they are nominated for the exchange by Vanderbilt.

There are no prerequisites for Vanderbilt students applying to Utrecht University.

- b. Utrecht University students applying for admission as an exchange student must submit to Vanderbilt:
 - i. Application form;
 - ii. Documentary proof of nationality;
 - iii. Transcript of academic record; and
 - iv. Documentary proof they are nominated for the exchange by Utrecht University

There are no prerequisites for Utrecht University students applying to Vanderbilt.

APPENDIX 2C

Financial Responsibility of Exchange Students

- a. Tuition, academic and obligatory fees at their home university. Correspondingly, these fees will be waived at the host university;
- b. Medical/health insurance;
- c. Obligatory expenditure required in the country of the host university;
- d. Journey to and from the country of the host university;
- e. Personal and living expenses, including accommodation and food; and
- f. Any debts/costs of damages incurred for the duration of their study abroad.

APPENDIX 3

Utrecht University and Vanderbilt University: Existing Collaborations

Latin American Studies and Anthropology

Vanderbilt and Utrecht share research interests concerning political violence issues in Guatemala. Representatives from Utrecht have visited Vanderbilt to pursue collaboration in this area, and Prof. Ted Fischer has traveled to Utrecht twice to further discussions.

Language and Literacy

Prof. Kevin Leander of Vanderbilt's Peabody College, Prof. Sandra Ponzanesi of Utrecht's Humanities Faculty, and Prof. Edward de Haan in Neuropsychology at Utrecht worked collaboratively on a research grant entitled, "Wired up: Digital media as innovative socialization practices for migrant youth."

Law

Vanderbilt Law School and Utrecht Law School partnered to provide concrete legal analysis to support the work of the constitutional courts that have performed a major role in promoting the rule of law following the breakdown of the authoritarian regimes in Central and Eastern Europe. A consortium of American and European Law schools provide the courts and judges, at their request, with solutions, taken from other jurisdictions and international law, to the questions they are facing.

Neuroscience

Collaboration has been underway in neuroscience for several years. On a recent visit from Utrecht (February 09), Professor Mark Wallace organized a series of meetings for Prof. Frans Verstraten (Utrecht) to explore ways in which the collaboration might be expanded. A delegation from Vanderbilt will be visiting Utrecht in Spring 2010 to continue the collaboration.

APPENDIX 4

Fact Sheet on Utrecht University

Facts and Figures

- 29,000 students, of which 2,000 are international students
- 222 academic programs: 45 bachelor programs (3 fully English taught), 196 master programs (89 English taught), 18 teacher-training programs (88 programs taught in English), and 200 courses open to international students
- 8,610 staff members (Medicine included)
- 640 professors and 275 professors by special appointment
- 950 PhD students
- 440 PhDs granted
- 7,330 Academic publications
- €715m budget (\$915m USD)
- 57 research schools in which UU participates
- 26 research schools of which UU is the coordinating university
- 7 faculties (Humanities; Law, Economics and Governance; Geosciences; Social and Behavioral Sciences; Science; Medicine; and Veterinary Medicine)
- University Medical Centre Utrecht