



viaa

Christian University of Applied Sciences



“A personal exploration into many new cultures.”

international magazine

Index

Interviews

Robertha Langenberg	3	Olayinka Olutade-Babatunde	18
Timea Korompai	4	René van Leeuwen	20
Peter Bareman	6	Foekje Pol and Jaap Roose	22
Tjalling Oosterhuis and Charlene Geertsema	8	Han Dommers	24
Gyula Sümeghy	13		
Neila Kinsman	14	Remaining	
Reina Timmer	16	Study programmes Viaa	9
Eric Forseth	17	Great memories	12

Why Viaa?

1. Christian University of Applied Sciences

Unique in Europe, specialised in Social domains, with Christian identity, all staff has a Christian background.

2. Small-scale University

Individual approach, small learning groups, personal character of the University / easy to make new contacts with teachers and students, brand-new building.

3. High-quality education

Accredited by the government, all programmes top-rated in several Dutch rankings, high student satisfaction.

4. Well-situated

Zwolle is a typical Dutch city with an animated student life. Within 2 hours travel distance from major cities in The Netherlands and Germany, including Amsterdam airport and Düsseldorf airport.

5. Problem-based teaching

Practical cases of the future field of profession are the starting point of teaching. Theory is always related to practice.

6. Practice-oriented, English-taught semesters

Practice-oriented studying, field trips, short internships, guest lecturers.

7. Unique intercultural programme

Learning about Dutch culture and society through an excursion programme, Dutch language training, live-in option with Dutch host families and a buddy programme with Dutch students.

About Viaa

Viaa is a small University in a city with a rich history: Zwolle. At Viaa, there are about 1600 students and 250 staff members. We know each other by name and work with small groups of students to stimulate cooperation and learning from each other. Viaa offers high-quality educational programmes and is awarded annually with a number-one position for most of their programmes.

Robertha:
“What inspires me is meeting other people.”

“The first time in my life that I went abroad for a longer period was when I was fifteen, for a holiday with my family in Luxembourg. I still remember the high mountains we had to cross by car, and the wonderful view on the area. Hearing all the different languages around me, felt as being far away from home and interesting. So impressive. Until now, I have been to several places on earth, from Peru to Malawi, from France and Germany to Canada and the USA, from Great Britain to Norway to Italy. What inspires me is meeting other people, being part of their cultural habitat, eating their meals, having conversations about their way of living, to talk about their rituals and the things that connect us. To wonder, to be surprised and to get inspiration.

I think that this intercultural experience is important for your development as a human being. For the understanding of the other, whether this is in the Dutch context or far away in another foreign context. It helps you to understand yourself, and to understand others in their ways of living and acting. That experience will offer input into your development as a professional. For that same reason, students from all over the world come to study in the Netherlands. And the other way around, our students are part of a project called 'internationalisation at home' or go abroad to experience new contexts.”

Robertha Langenberg, MScN
Program Director Internationalisation Viaa



“Not only did we learn about the Dutch culture, but about each other’s cultures as well.”

Tímea: “SPICE offered me a multinational experience.”

Tímea Korompai (24) is a student Japanese and Dutch Culture and Language at Károli Gáspár University in Budapest, Hungary. In 2018, she participated in the SPICE programme of Viaa, Christian University of Applied Sciences.

Master

At the moment, Tímea plans to do her master. Since it will be a master in Diplomacy or in International Relations, it was essential for her further studies to get to know another country’s culture. Tímea seized the opportunity to participate in the SPICE-programme in the Netherlands with both hands: “In addition, I thought that the SPICE programme would extend my opportunities in the future to find a better job. And it is true: SPICE offered me a multinational experience, highly valued nowadays among employers. I also wanted to be an exchange student to get to know the Dutch culture and language better. This comes in handy, because I am writing my final thesis about the Dutch and Japanese relations. So, it was very useful for me to learn more about Dutch history through the SPICE programme.”

Amazing friends

Tímea mentions the SPICE programme as “one of the greatest moments in her life”. “I would recommend this programme to anyone who wants to get amazing experiences abroad. I gained so many experiences in a different environment.” Not only the educational programme and the cultural aspect contributed to Tímea’s positive experience. “My exchange year also was great because I made a lot of amazing friends in the Netherlands. I cannot wait to see them again. I also loved spending time with the other exchange students from the States, Nepal and Nigeria. Not only did we learn about the Dutch culture, but about each other’s cultures as well. Our trip to Rome was also very memorable for each of us.”

Interesting excursions

For Tímea, the most memorable course at Viaa was the Culture & Society class. According to her, the practical experiences that occurred during the programme were particularly interesting. Tímea: “We had lots of interesting excursions which really made this course outstanding. We learned so many things from our professor, Kees van Loon. We visited the most famous cities in the Netherlands. For example: Utrecht, Amsterdam, Den Haag, and Groningen. But also, museums like: the Rijksmuseum and the Mauritshuis. I am more than satisfied with my personal achievements. At the end of the SPICE programme I realised that these four months I spent in the Netherlands were too short to get to know this beautiful country. So I am planning to go back as soon as I can!”

Tímea Korompai

Alumnus SPICE



Students in Rome

Into new perspectives on Christian belief through contemporary theology

As a lecturer in Theology, Peter Bareman is involved in the international study programmes of Viaa University. Over the past fifteen years he has been responsible for the course 'Reformed theology in a modern era'. Every year, international students come to Zwolle for four months, to experience contemporary life and education in The Netherlands. Therefore, a major theology course concerning modern theological topics is a suitable challenge in this international experience.

Shock

Bareman: "The course contains a lot of reading and studying. But during the lectures, we spend a lot of time discussing the main question of much theological thought: Who is Jesus Christ for (post)modern people?" Bareman wants to set his students thinking with his classes. At some point during the study programme, topics are discussed that create a shock in the group of international students. "The first shock students experience is the overwhelming and devastating effect of modernity in the 19th century on Christian thinking. We learn about Karl Barth, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Rudolf Bultmann and Martin Luther King. These characters reveal that it is worthwhile to study Theology, even in a secular age", says Bareman.

Reformed bubble

Bareman wants his students to step out of their Christian, or Reformed, bubble: "I want them to consider that modernity affects the whole culture, our Christian culture as well. At the same time, we experience that a Christian voice can be heard, in the cacophony of voices of today. But only when we discover that voice, we sense that being a Christian nowadays is considered an abnormality in this world."

Opportunities

According to Bareman, this way of teaching and studying offers a lot of opportunities: we study, we debate, we listen, we reread and we reflect. And we always pray to God that He may help us to understand our culture. Not to step aside or to turn away from society. We are part of society and in this society a small voice can be heard: come to Me, all you who are weary..."

Overwhelming

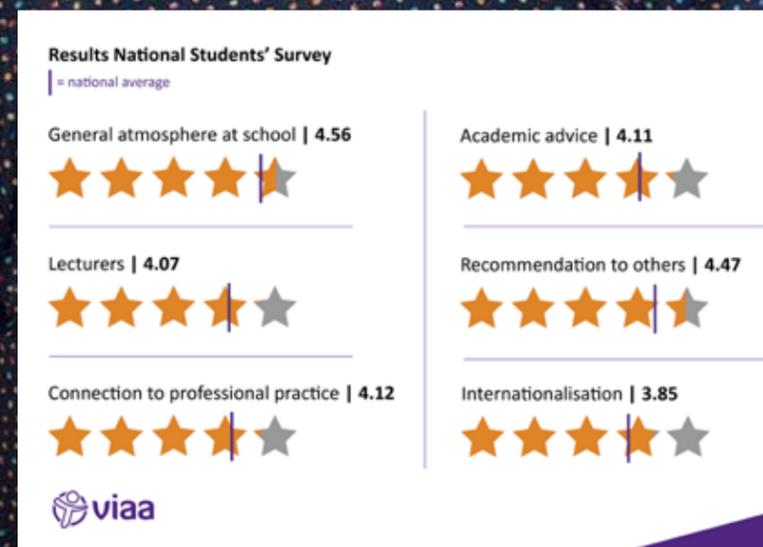
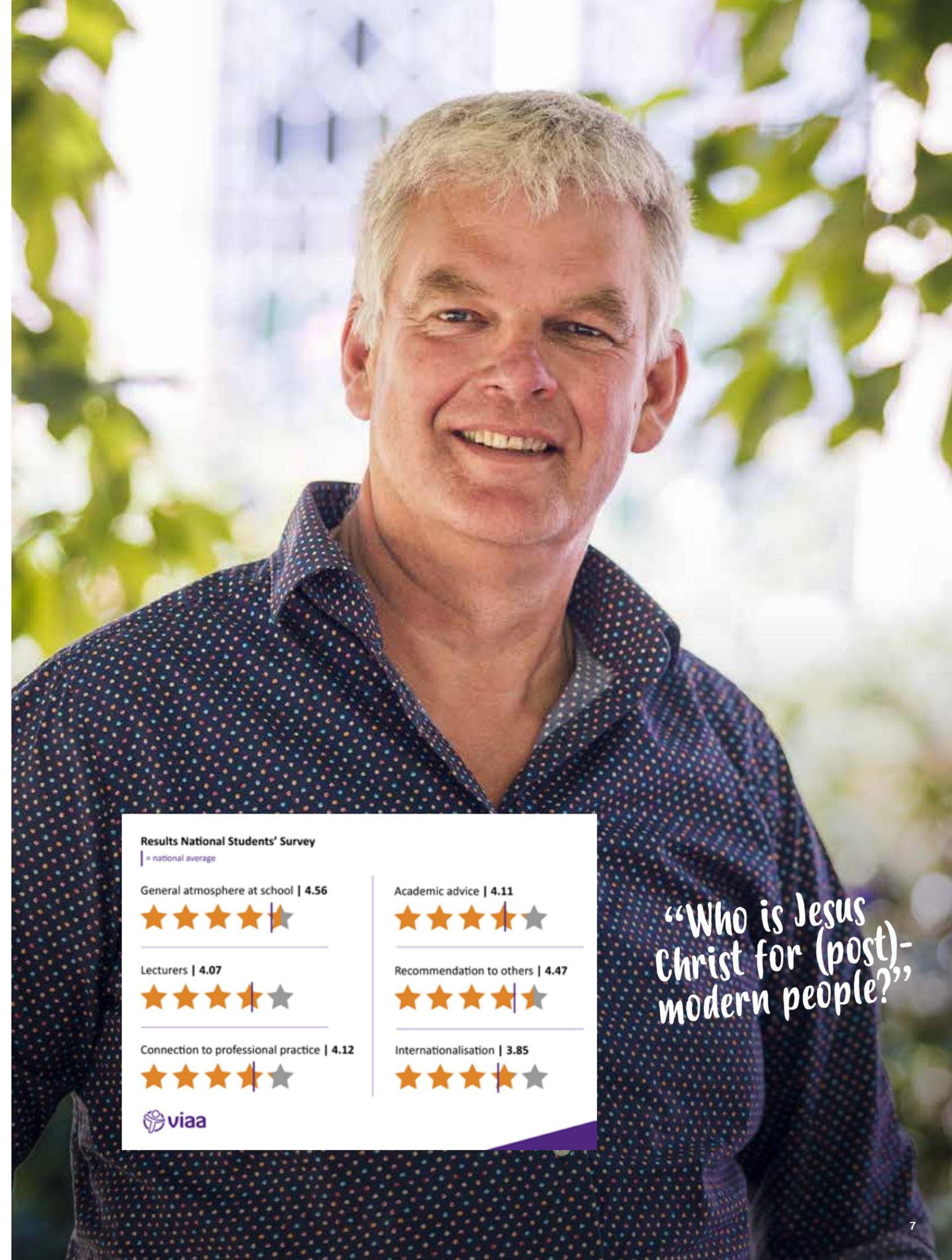
How do students in an international setting experience this talking and listening, debating and presenting their own thoughts? Is this way of teaching that differs from what they are used to? Bareman: "For some students, this is very difficult. When you are used to sitting down, to listening and to making notes, this way of teaching can be overwhelming. But all students I have taught find that talking and debating about Christ and culture is a challenging event, in a positive way. I hope it is also a lifechanging event. That is my personal drive as a professor connected to this international programme at Viaa."

Peter Bareman

Lecturer in Theology



Study trip to Vatican



"Who is Jesus Christ for (post)-modern people?"

Tjalling and Charlene:
 “Our drive is to welcome students to a Christian University in the Netherlands.”

For Viaa students, international students, and relations from other universities, Tjalling and Charlene are trusted contact persons. Together, they manage the International Office of Viaa.

Fundamentals of Christianity

As the most pleasant part of their job, Tjalling and Charlene mention their opportunity to meet Christians from all over the world. Tjalling: “Our drive is to welcome students to a Christian University in the Netherlands. We challenge students to find their way in the open-minded Dutch society and discover why decisions regarding education, politics, social life etc. are made as they are in the Netherlands. Meanwhile, we enjoy sharing the Christian foundations in life, in the programme we have developed for International students.” According to Tjalling, the result is an unforgettable experience of intercultural learning.

Support

But what is their role as the International Office? What do they provide in available study programmes? Tjalling: “As the International Office, we are well informed of the different programmes, we are always looking for new, interesting options for International students to join in the high-quality education at Viaa. We take care of advising students who are in the process of choosing a programme.” Charlene adds: “We like to support students in this process, by providing great lecturers, an inspiring environment, and host families in the city of Zwolle.”

Practical situations

During a semester at Viaa, the International Office also helps out students in practical situations. Charlene: “If your bike is unfortunately stolen, or you have lost a travel document, we can help in the process of getting things back on track. We want to make sure students have a good time in the Netherlands.”

Besides the International Students, Tjalling and Charlene are also available for Viaa students going abroad. The International Office knows about visa procedures and helps students with their preparations for a study semester or internship abroad.

Contact

Contacts at Universities abroad are most welcome to contact the International Office, Charlene and Tjalling say. “They can contact us by email: internationaloffice@viaa.nl. After the first contact, we can see what the possibilities are, and if our programme matches the criteria of their University, we would be happy to welcome their students at Viaa”, Tjalling assures.

Tjalling Oosterhuis and Charlene Geertsema

International Office

Top 5 questions

Top 5 questions, to be answered before coming to the Netherlands

1. What can I study during a semester at Viaa?
2. Can I do an internship in the Netherlands?
3. Can I keep up sporting during a semester abroad?
4. How do I find housing in the Netherlands?
5. What are the costs of a semester at Viaa?

Study programmes

Domains

Viaa offers four programmes in the domains Education, Nursing, Social Work and Theology. These are bachelor-level programmes. It is possible to study full-time and part-time. In addition, post-graduate and master programmes are offered, and refresher courses. All these programmes are taught in Dutch.

English-taught semesters and courses

For incoming international students, we offer English-language semesters:

- Transcultural Nursing
- Connecting Professional Community Care
- SPICE
- SPICE+ Nursing
- SPICE+ Social Work

All of these are 30 ECTS semesters.

Contact

Email to: internationaloffice@viaa.nl
 (see page 24).

Application

Visit our website: www.viaa.nl/application

About Viaa

Viaa is a Christian University of Applied Sciences, with a distinctive character. We believe that Jesus' love for the world sets an example for us in our contact with others. We attach great value to qualitatively good education, advice, and research. Our students rate the quality and advice within their programme with outstanding marks.

Characteristics

As a University of Applied Sciences, our programme focus on the students' professional training. Theory and research are applied to the future professional context. The introduction to the future professional practice by means of internships already starts in the first academic year. Education at Viaa can be characterised by a wide variety of teaching methods, involving a lot of interaction between lecturer and students. We make a strong appeal to the students' independence and their responsibility. Viaa is a small-scale university. Consequently, there is a lot personal attention for our students.



Study programmes

English-taught semesters and courses

Contact for information: internationaloffice@viaa.nl



1. Transcultural Care (30 ECTS)

- Planning: fall 2018 / spring 2019
- Testing: knowledge test, article, and portfolio.
- Applicable fields of study: Nursing and Social Work
- Brief description:

Transcultural Care is an English-taught semester programme with a focus on the issue of how to deal with cultural differences, in order to create equality in care. Students are encouraged to step out of their own frame of reference and be inspired by the diversity in the world.

In the course, the focus is put on awareness of cultural diversity, one's own prejudices, and stereotypes. In the next lessons, this is applied to racism and discrimination. The programme is well-founded with the theories of cultural anthropology and cultural diversity, connected with professional care. Spirituality and religion as aspects of culture, as well as gender and sex, birth and death are part of the course content. All topics are related to the profession of a care giver.

In the second part of the course, the focus will be on intercultural communication, applied to interviewing and with a link to care literacy. Transcultural psychiatry, elderly care, refugees and FGM are part of the content of this part of the course.

During the course, the students have at least one day and at the most two days a week time for practical assignments like: interviews, visiting families from a different cultural background, etc. 50% of the course hours is contact time in class and for assignments with other students. The other half is meant for self-study.

- Contact for information: m.harink@viaa.nl

2. Connecting Professional in Community Care (30 ECTS)

- Planning: fall 2018
- Testing: write an article, deliver a TED talk, and develop a portfolio
- Applicable fields of study: Nursing, Social Work and Theology
- Brief description:

Connecting Professional in Community care

is an English-taught semester programme with a focus on professional service in communities. After completing this minor, you are able to analyse communities, you can develop an innovative plan for a community problem, initiate activities and execute a plan which is beneficial to the members of the community in order to help them to cope with their problems. In this minor, you learn what communities are, how they work and you collaborate with students from other study programmes. Lectures, such as basics of civil society, sociology, history, politics, networking, co-creation, professionals and institutions in communities, community problems (addiction, poverty, loneliness, getting older, etc.) and solutions, will be given.

Together with fellow students, you will develop a plan on how to tackle a real-life community problem and implement this plan with your fellow students and professionals. As a support, there will be lectures about professional entrepreneurship, innovation, and sustainability.

- Contact for information: e.hoekman@viaa.nl



3. SPICE (30ECTS)

- Planning: spring 2019
- Testing: knowledge tests, portfolio, and presentations.
- Three mandatory courses:
 - Dutch Culture and Society (6 ECTS), Art and Architecture (6 ECTS), and Cross-Cultural Understanding (6 ECTS)
- Two electives out of: Dutch language, History of the Low Countries, Contemporary Theology, and International Marketing. (6 ECTS each)
- Brief description:

SPICE is an English-taught semester programme focusing on cultural understanding and personal growth. It is an intensive study programme during which students are fully immersed in the Dutch culture. They live a nice, medium-sized Dutch city, experience the Dutch educational system, and travel a lot, not only in the Netherlands, but also in Europe. The main focus of the programme is cross-cultural understanding. Students experience the Dutch culture in many ways. An important feature of the programme is hands-on learning. In addition to theory in class, students experience their living environment, make study trips and do practical assignments as a rich learning environment.

All these experiences are brought together in the portfolio class, as the learning environment for Cross-Cultural Understanding. Here, students are coached by a professional tutor to reflect on their cross-cultural learning process. For the portfolio class, they have to carry out research on a personal topic of investigation.

4. SPICE+ Social Work (30 ECTS)

- Planning: spring 2019
- Testing: knowledge tests, portfolio, and presentations.
- Four mandatory courses:
 - Dutch Culture and Society (6 ECTS), Art and Architecture (6 ECTS), and Cross-Cultural Understanding (6 ECTS), Social Work in Europe (6 ECTS)
- One elective out of: Dutch language, History of the Low Countries, Contemporary Theology, and International Marketing. (6 ECTS each)
- Brief description:

SPICE is an English-taught semester programme focusing on cultural understanding and personal growth. It is an intensive study programme, during which students are fully immersed in the Dutch culture. They live a nice, medium-sized Dutch city, experience the Dutch educational system, and travel a lot, not only in the Netherlands, but also in Europe.

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All these experiences are brought together in the portfolio class, as the learning environment for cross-cultural understanding. Here, students are coached by a professional tutor to reflect on their cross-cultural learning process. For the portfolio class, they have to carry out research on a personal topic of investigation. The preparation and experience of the trip in Social Work in Europe is part of the intercultural experience that participants can use as input for portfolio class.

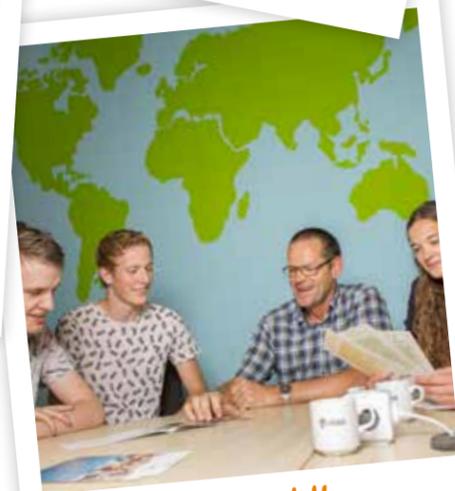
Great memories



Students in a wooden shoe



Amsterdam



Tjalling at the International Office



Student life in Zwolle

About 30,000 students study in Zwolle, in one of the four Universities. As well as a beautiful historic centre, the city has lots of parks. Zwolle is a great place to shop. It's also a safe city: if you learn how to ride a bike, it's easy to get around. Student life in Zwolle is focused around the city centre, which is packed with attractive cafés and restaurants.



The brand new building of Viaa in Zwolle



Gyula (Károli Gáspár University):
“It is encouraging to know that we are not alone in our mission.”

Gyula Sümeghy is Director of International Relations at Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church in Hungary. He develops, coordinates, and supervises the international relations of the university. In 2016, the Faculty of Humanities and the Faculty of Theology entered into Erasmus agreements with Viaa and that is when the cooperation between both universities started.

Fresh ideas

Sümeghy tells about what this cooperation has yielded in the past years: “Besides ongoing student and teacher mobility, our university received a student group from Viaa in March 2017. A few months later, a delegation of three professors from our Faculty of Teacher Training paid a visit to Zwolle to explore the possibilities of expanding the partnership to the field of teacher training. Together with a colleague, I myself visited Viaa in January 2018 and returned with really good impressions and fresh ideas.”

Trust and respect

Sümeghy's positive feelings about the relationship with Viaa are not only based on the fact that there is much to be learned from each other in terms of best practices or lessons learned. “Our cooperation is based on mutual trust and respect. Today, when Christian values in higher education are fading in several countries and regions, it is encouraging to know that we are not alone in our mission. We see potential for further development in our partnership. For instance, new Erasmus agreements could be elaborated and cooperation might also be extended to joint research or conferences”, Sümeghy proposes.

Gyula Sümeghy

Károli Gáspár University (Hungary)

“Our cooperation is based on mutual trust and respect.”



“The Business Track helped me improve my communication skills in many ways.”

Neila: “Living with a host family means diving into the Dutch culture.”

Neila Kinsman is a undergrad at Dordt College (US), studying Agricultural Business. Neila took part in the SPICE programme in the spring of 2018. She followed the Business Track of this programme and loved ‘diving right into the Dutch culture by living with a host family and going to Viaa’.

Once in a lifetime

Neila: “The SPICE programme gave me an incredible education and personal experience in those four months. Looking back, I can say this experience was once in a lifetime. Due to this programme, I met many new friends and families full of laughter and stories that I will never forget.”

Different cultures

The Business Track gives international students the opportunity to explore how different cultures in Europe choose different ways of doing business. Neila confirms this outcome: “During the International Business Track, we were given three practical projects to work on in three different countries: the Netherlands, Germany, and Romania. It was very interesting to see how the culture had a huge effect on how each country conducts business. It also helped me improve my communication skills in many ways.”

Valuable experience

Neila thinks that Viaa does a great job of providing international students with classes that enhance their experience in the Netherlands. “Viaa gave us unique ways to explore the new culture we were in”, Neila says. She thinks the SPICE programme can be a valuable experience for any international student. “I recommend this programme to any student looking to broaden their education in new and exciting ways! The SPICE programme of Viaa

has so much to offer that you can't experience in any other way. It is a personal exploration into many new cultures. Walking into this programme, you may not realise what you are getting yourself into, but coming out, you definitely will say: This was an unexpectedly valuable event.”

The Netherlands

How did Neila experience The Netherlands as a country? Neila: “The Netherlands is a very unique country, full of opportunity and new adventure. No matter what bike path you take, there is another beautiful canal, family farm, or village just around the corner. The people that I have met along my journey here have been wonderful. My amazing host family, professors and new friends enhanced my experience at Viaa.”

Neila Kinsman
Alumnus SPICE



Neila and Sippie



Romania



Reina Timmer about being a host parent

Since 2012, Reina Timmer has been working at Viaa University as a Healthcare lecturer. That is how she learned about the SPICE programme. In 2015, they made a call for host families for international students of Viaa University in Reina's church in Zwolle. Reina signed up her family and they liked it so much that they hosted another student last year: Neila Kinsman.

Croquette and 'frikandel'

Reina tells about her experiences as a host parent: "We had such a wonderful time together! From the first time we met, until the very last day, it has been a privilege to have Neila stay with us! We enjoyed her cheerfulness, positivity, and participation. We hit it off right from the start, and Neila integrated smoothly into our family. Walking the dog, even when it rained, eating fries with croquette and 'frikandel', biking to the stores... it was no big deal for Neila. There was only one thing that Neila absolutely did not like: our real Dutch black liquorice."

Football

Reina's daughter, Sippie and Neila turned out to share the same passion for football. Neila plays in a football team at Dordt University, and Sippie plays soccer in Zwolle. Reina: "It was really nice that Neila could join Sippie's football team, during her stay in the Netherlands. She fitted right in."

Contact

Thanks to Neila, Reina was also introduced to the other SPICE students. "They were regular visitors at our place. What a wonderful group: time flew by! Fortunately, we are still in contact with Neila, by WhatsApp, Facetime and Facebook. We would really love to visit her in the USA", Reina concludes.

Reina Timmer

SPICE host parent

"We would love to visit Neila in the USA!"



Eric (Dordt University): "SPICE is our most vibrant and popular study abroad option."

Eric Forseth is Provost at Dordt University. Ever since 1980(!), Dordt has had a Study Programme in Central Europe (SPICE). The relationship with Viaa in Zwolle has existed for almost twenty years.

Value

Forseth clearly sees added value for Dordt students in SPICE: "We want our students to develop an awareness of cultural traditions in the Netherlands and surrounding European communities. SPICE gives us this possibility. The programme helps them understand the contemporary political, economic, ecclesiastical, and social structures of this region. It also helps to acquaint students with the historical interweaving of culture, politics, economics, and communities of faith in Dutch society." The opportunity SPICE offers to students in recognizing different cultural systems and beliefs, and in understanding more deeply their own culture and biblical worldview is also one of the unique benefits, according to Forseth. "Our students develop skills and sensitivity in cross-cultural communication and experience living as Christians in cross-cultural settings. Besides that, they learn or improve Dutch language skills through formal instruction and informal conversations with host families and fellow Dutch students", Forseth says.

Customised programme

The valuable partnership Dordt University has with Viaa has existed for so long because the programme is customised for the learning needs of Dordt's students', Forseth suggests. "If an Education major wants to participate in the Viaa programme, we find a way to accomplish this objective together. If a Business or Language Studies

student wants to participate in the Viaa study abroad programme, we navigate the goals for the semester with appropriate courses and other positive experiences within the fabric of Dutch culture." The Provost praises the strong relationship between Dordt University and Viaa: "Our long-standing history has allowed us to keep in communication often and to accommodate all kinds of student interest. The SPICE programme is our most vibrant and popular study abroad option at Dordt University."

Strong potential

If it is up to Forseth, Viaa should offer more courses taught in English. "There is strong potential for expanding student interest in multiple majors. There could also be opportunities to designate year-long co-op and internship opportunities in the years ahead. Our students have a keen desire to learn more about organisational and business placements, because they will consider international placements after finishing their university education."

Eric Forseth

Dordt University

Olayinka:
“The internship at health sectors exposed me to new skills in nursing practice.”

One of the alumni of SPICE+ 2018 is Olayinka Olutade-Babatunde from Nigeria. How does she look back upon the SPICE+ programme?

Learning how to bike

Right from the very first moment Olayinka joined the group of international students of Viaa University, she attracted attention because of her Nigerian background and her open attitude to the Dutch culture. Having just arrived in the Netherlands, one of her major challenges is not within the Nursing profession. The bike is the main means of transport for the Dutch. As it happened, Olayinka had absolutely no experience with biking! So, during her first few days, right after class, she throws herself into learning how to bike.

Intercultural Nursing

The SPICE+ programme is a programme specifically intended to introduce international students to the intercultural side of nursing. Olayinka tells about her experience with this programme: “My period at Viaa really helped me to become a culturally competent Nurse. The understanding of Cultural dimension theory, various excursions, and the healthcare internship all helped the quality of my delivery as a Nursing Tutor. Most importantly, the internship at various health sectors exposed me to new skills in nursing practice.”

Wonderful experience

Olayinka wants to emphasise that the SPICE+ programme educated her, not only because of its contents, but as an experience in itself. “SPICE+ at Viaa was a wonderful experience! The lecturers are very calm, accessible, and willing to help with course work. The environment is very conducive for learning with very welcoming and friendly students. I will definitely recommend this experience at Viaa to other international students. At Viaa you will meet friendly fellow students, accessible lectures and a conducive learning environment.”

Lecturer of Nursing

Olayinka gained her certificate for SPICE+ nursing. As a lecturer of Nursing at the Nursing Science Department of the University of Benin, she will be able to apply her knowledge and experience to her daily work with her students.

Olayinka Olutade-Babatunde

Alumnus SPICE+



Internship Isala Hospital

“At Viaa you will meet friendly fellow students, accessible lectures and a conducive learning environment.”



Healthcare and Spirituality: talking about the reason why of being sick

Viaa University of Applied Sciences has three academies, each with a lectureship. René van Leeuwen is lecturer Healthcare and Spirituality at the Academy of Healthcare research group. Besides being a lecturer, René is a member of the project group designing the new Bachelor of Nursing curriculum.

Network

The Healthcare and Spirituality research group of Viaa University carries out applied research regarding the theme spirituality in healthcare. For twenty years, this topic has René van Leeuwen's special interest. In 2008, he obtained his PhD at the University of Groningen with a thesis on 'Towards nursing competencies in spiritual care'. In an Erasmus+ project, Van Leeuwen currently builds a structural network of teachers and researchers, who are interested in this topic from their own discipline.

Knowledge

Higher education in the Netherlands has the opportunity to develop practice-oriented knowledge. Van Leeuwen considers this an important task: "Knowledge at universities of applied sciences is an element that needs continuous development. This can be encouraged by conducting applied research. We gather new practical knowledge for professionals in the profession. Such an investigative attitude is essential in training future professionals. Viaa University trains nurses who are willing to scrutinise their profession, who dare to ask knowledge questions and are able to tackle small-scale practical questions. This attitude creates a vision necessary in future healthcare."

NSM

Nursing students at Viaa University use the Neuman Systems Model (NSM) in their work. The model trains the care provider in approaching the patient as a human being with all of their aspects. Van Leeuwen explains: "If a person falls sick, this affects multiple aspects. An athlete with a complex leg fracture may never be able to play a sport again on the same level as prior to the fracture. Such a fracture may affect his entire being. It can raise questions concerning the meaning of life. Therefore, it is important for patients to have a talk with a nurse about themselves and the reason why of being sick." The lecturer wants to put this spiritual and philosophical aspect of healthcare on the agenda. And he is successful, judging by the questions he receives from the educational sector, the work field and from politics.

Robots

Together with his research group, Van Leeuwen currently helps a hospital implementing spiritual questions within the electronic patients record. Van Leeuwen: "This concerns questions such as: What is it like to be ill? What problems do you encounter? We train nurses to foster the awareness in their work environment that a focus on spirituality

is essential in patient care." The applied research of the Healthcare and Spirituality research group is linked to the topicality of technology in healthcare as well. Van Leeuwen considers this a fascinating development: "For instance, think of the use of robots in healthcare. How do you deal with that as care providers? When can robots replace a flesh-and-blood nurse and when can't they?"

EPICC

When it comes to international collaboration, Van Leeuwen senses great opportunities. "It can be very enriching for students to collaborate with foreign students during their training. At Viaa University, we have a network that is worldwide. Within the EPICC project (Enhancing Nurses' and Midwives' Competence in Providing Spiritual Care through Innovative Education and Compassionate Care) we collaborate with 25 European partners, and partners from the USA and Asia. Every two years, we organise a conference, where international students meet. In 2020, this conference will take place in the Netherlands, at Viaa University", says Van Leeuwen.

René van Leeuwen

Lecturer Healthcare and Spirituality

For more information, contact René van Leeuwen: r.vanleeuwen@viaa.nl tel: +31 38 4255542



"Knowledge at universities of applied sciences is an element that needs continuous development."

Teacher Exchange unites teachers from all over the world

Foekje and Jaap: “We have a story to share from our Dutch context.”

Within the Teacher Exchange programme, teachers from Viaa University meet their colleagues from other countries. Both in the Netherlands and abroad, inside and outside Europe. Nursing lecturer Foekje Pol and Social Work lecturer Jaap Roose share their experiences with this exchange programme.

Blended learning

Foekje: “Our Nursing programme pays a lot of attention to the role spirituality plays in healthcare. We both have been at an international week at DIAK in Helsinki, Finland. I presented the WebApp on existential questions, or questions of life, that Viaa developed for the elderly.” Jaap adds: “During a workshop week on blended learning, we have established valuable contacts with educational institutions in Helsinki and Copenhagen. And, in Finland we were able to tell our colleagues about how we apply blended learning in our programmes.”

Enriching

Foekje went on a study trip to Lisbon, Portugal: “We visited Portugal’s largest hospital and a Nursing training, together with a group of 22 third-year students. There, we discovered clear cultural differences with the Netherlands and we saw how our Portuguese colleagues achieve their goal in a different way than we are used to.” The teachers have gained positive experiences in the area of Teacher Exchange in Malta, Latvia, Romania, Norway, USA, Nigeria, and Nepal as well. Jaap: “To visit universities in other countries in person is enriching for us as teachers. And this works both ways! In 2016, I hosted two teachers from Oslo, and in 2017, teachers from Károli Gáspár (Hungary) and Dordt College (USA). In both years, I visited the Dutch work field together with them. It is good to exchange professional knowledge in such a personal way.” When asked about the main added value of these experiences, they answer unanimously: “Discovering time and again that cultures differ, and with that opinions, policies and conduct as well. And, we are clearly not doing such a

bad job, in healthcare and social work in the Netherlands. We have a story to share from our Dutch context.”

Misunderstandings

Sometimes, cultural differences can also create hilarious misunderstandings. Foekje says: “In Lisbon, our students themselves organised the journey and the excursions. They can perfectly handle that amount of independence, and as Dutch teachers we take this for granted. But at the end of the excursions, our teachers were thanked by their Portuguese colleagues. They received gifts and were praised. When we made clear that our students should receive all praise, the Portuguese teachers were lost in amazement. It was beyond them that our students had organised this themselves and that our teachers had played no role in it at all!”

Foekje Pol and Jaap Roose

Teacher Exchange



Study trip to Lisbon, Portugal

Han Dommers (Nuffic):
“Viaa is a good example of the diversity between universities in The Netherlands.”



Nuffic is the Dutch organisation for internationalisation in education.

The internationalisation of higher education has added value for students, educational institutions, the Netherlands and worldwide. For the student, this has added value in socialisation, personal development and qualification. Especially for those for whom this is not self-evident. By acquiring international competences, students are better qualified for an increasingly globalising labour market. International knowledge and skills are increasingly required in the socio-cultural domain, in science and research, and in business.

Viaa University of Applied Sciences has signed the Code of Conduct International Student in Dutch Higher Education. This code mentions that we want to further improve and strengthen international cooperation, and that

the Netherlands wishes to promote itself abroad as a knowledge society together with its higher education institutions. Not only is diversity within an international classroom important but diversity between universities in The Netherlands is essential as well. Viaa is a good example of that diversity. Last but certainly not least, I would like to recommend that, after their study at Viaa, international students will keep in touch with Viaa as alumni.

They can also register in our Holland alumni network www.hollandalumni.nl and benefit from events and information that Nuffic provides.

Han Dommers

Member of the Board, Nuffic

Contact Viaa

Are you interested in Viaa? Want to know more about the study opportunities? Please contact our International Office!

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Design VORMSHOP
Printing Zalsman