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| Final Project | Benchmarking of the recruitment activities of the leading European Universities offering BA European Studies |



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# Executive Summary

The following research deals with the topic of student recruitment for the BA European Studies programme by the leading European universities offering this programme. The individual results of each benchmarking process can be located within each section of the report, and together formed the final ranking system of universities in regards to the universities’ factors influencing student recruitment. The 10 benchmarked universities were: University of Amsterdam, University of Twente, University of Oslo, University Babes-Bolyai, Universität Osnabrück, University of Southern Denmark, University of Essex, King’s College London, University of Birmingham and Maastricht University. Each section of the report was viewed as a category for individual benchmarking, and the most significant findings were as following:

* The findings of the Basic Information Section were that the universities are mostly similar in their focus on languages, the knowledge of the public sector and economics in their BA European Studies curriculum. The universities were also similar in their teaching methodologies which only differ in certain cases by minor differences, such as at the University of Southern Denmark, which places smaller emphasis on attendance and larger emphasis on individual self-study.
* The section of Admission Requirements focused on practical benchmarking of the admission requirements of each university. The results of this benchmarking proved that the mainland universities largely shared their admission requirements, with the British universities requesting more of their potential students – specifically in terms of grades. The results of this section were inconclusive towards the final ranking of the universities.
* The section of Promotional Activities and events organised by the universities, in which the British universities – with University of Birmingham offering the most diverse selection of activities – proved to be the most diverse in terms of the promotional event options for students, as well as the way they inform the students of these options.
* The section of Money Matters dealt with the benchmarking of tuition fees and scholarship options offered by the respective universities, as well as analysing the living costs that students need to expect from the various locations. In this section the University of Oslo was the leader with the non-existent tuition fees, with British universities faring the worst in this category.
* The section of Websites focused on the benchmarking of the websites of each university. This was carried out in a lengthy comparative analysis, which can be found in the Appendix 1.1. The results of this benchmarking concluded in the ranking of each website in 4 main categories, with the ranking being subjective to a critical evaluation of the advantages and disadvantages of each. The 4 categories, or aspects, were targeted at what a potential international student might look for on a website regarding his/her choice of BA European Studies. In this section, each university had its weaker and stronger points, but the websites of the British universities proved to be the most superior, with the websites of the Dutch universities being successful as well.
* The last of the benchmarking s of individual sections was the comparative analysis of the universal ranking system for higher education institutions, in which Maastricht University holds the fifth place, placing slightly ahead of the University of Twente.

The benchmarking process was concluded in chapter XI with the final overall ranking of the universities’ factors influencing student recruitment. The 4 main factors influencing the recruitment activities were established as Promotional activities, Tuition fees, Websites and Rankings. Further factors which influenced the final ranks were the added-value factors of scholarships and campus accommodation availability. The three best ranked universities were the British universities, with King’s College London being awarded the 1st place . Maastricht University was ranked as the 4th best university in terms of its recruitment activities.

The main conclusions of the benchmarking were the following. The teaching methodology of the BA European Studies is largely the same across all benchmarked universities, with only minor differences such as required school attendance or division of the types of classes per modules. The admission criteria were the same for all universities, with the British universities placing a bigger emphasis on the weight of grades on the potential applicants’ high school diplomas. Promotional activities were largely shared by the universities’, with few innovative activities such as Accommodation tour or Virtual tour of the campus being offered by the British universities only. Scholarships owned and distributed directly by the universities were in the case of each university offered mostly to Master’s students only, with University Babes-Bolyai and the British universities being the only exception to this rule. The best ranks for websites were awarded to the British universities, with Maastricht University being awarded the 4th place. The first place was awarded to King’s College London.

The main recommendations for the Marketing department of Maastricht University were concerning possible improvements to the website, such as adding more statistics and implementing new functions. As for specific recruitment activities, the main recommendation was to implement the Accommodation tour, currently employed by University of Birmingham.

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# Introduction

The undergraduate programme of BA European Studies is a relatively new programme compared to other humanities’ programmes, and the interest of potential students in this programme is continuously rising in the past years. It is for that reason that the Marketing department of Maastricht University wished to benchmark the recruitment activities of other universities in its target countries of recruitment, in order to compare them with its own. The topic of the following report is:

*The benchmarking of the recruitment activities of the leading European universities offering the programme BA European Studies, with a focus on providing recommendations on possible improvements to the recruitment activities of Maastricht University.*

The purpose of this benchmarking research is to compare all aspects of recruitment activities by the ten selected universities, to find their common traits and to identify their various differences. The universities were selected on two requirements. First requirement was for the university to be located within a country deemed as a target country for recruitment by Maastricht University. Second requirement was for the university to be on a comparable academic level to that of Maastricht University. Based on these two requirements, the following countries and their respective universities were selected:

* Denmark – University of Southern Denmark
* Germany – Universität Osnabrück
* Norway – University of Oslo
* Romania – University Babes-Bolyai
* The Netherlands – University of Amsterdam, University of Twente
* United Kingdom – King’s College London, University of Essex, University of Birmingham

During my internship at the marketing department of the Faculty of Social Arts and Sciences at Maastricht University, I took part in the university’s recruitment efforts and through this report I aimed to put my obtained working experience to practice.

As the international students of BA European Studies at Maastricht University consist largely of German and Belgian students, my focus concerning potential new international students will be placed on all foreign nationalities and the pull factors relevant to the recruitment of students of further located countries, who in most cases do the largest amount of research on individual universities by distance. The focus will however not be placed solely on the international students, but will deal with the recruitment similarities and differences of local students as well.

Other questions which will also be answered by this benchmarking research include the key pulling factors of potential international students by the respective universities and analysis of the various recruitment strategies as employed by the benchmarked universities. The focus in answering these questions will be placed on the universities’ own ways of presenting themselves to the potential students.

The research and benchmarking consists of the following chapters:

* **About Maastricht University**, which serves as the general information section on Maastricht University.
* **General Information Section**, in which the universities are benchmarked on the criteria of mission, profile, size, history of BA European Studies, language of instruction and teaching methodology to provide an introductory view of the universities.
* **Admission requirements**, in which the universities are benchmarked on the requirements of their admission procedures.
* **Promotional activities**, which provides a detailed comparison of the promotional activities employed by each university, their similarities and differences.
* **Money matters**, which is divided into 2 sections: tuition fees and scholarships.
* **Websites**, which provides a detailed comparison of the universties’ websites and their functions.
* **Campus accommodation**, which provides a brief comparison of the accommodation options as offered by each of the benchmarked universities.
* **Rankings**, in which the universities were benchmarked according to their ranking in Times Higher Education ranking system (THE).
* **Final benchmarking**, in which the universities are awarded final scores and ranks as compared to each other based on the categories benchmarked in previous sections of the research.
* **Recommendations**, which provides recommendations to Maastricht University based on the findings of this research.

The following research was carried out through a combination of both desk and field research. While large portions of the used data were obtained through desk research, for majority of the statistics I have established contacts at each of the benchmarked universities. The field research in this case consisted of direct communication through personal communication. The research culminates with the Recommendations section, which is targeted specifically at the provider of the assignment, Maastricht University.

The sources to sections marked with endnotes can be located in the section Notes.

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| **Legend:** |  |  |  |
| University of Amsterdam | UoA | University of Southern Denmark | UoSD |
| University of Twente | UoT | University of Essex | UoE |
| University of Oslo | UoO | King’s College London | KCL |
| University Babes-Bolyai | UBB | University of Birmingham | UoB |
| Universität Osnabrück | UO | Maastricht University | MU |

# About Maastricht University

Maastricht University (MU) is one of the leading Dutch and European universities, well-known for its large international base of students, its innovative approach to teaching and for its multidisciplinary research. With almost 45% of its students and 30 % of its academic staff of foreign nationality, MU presents itself as the most international university in the Netherlands, surpassing multi-cultural cities such as Amsterdam or The Hague for example. (MU, 2011, ‘’About UM’’ section, ¶ 4) Officially founded in 1976, MU is the youngest university in the Netherlands and also benefits from its location in the historically significant city of Maastricht. (MU, 2011, ‘’History’’ section, ¶ 4) With its location at the crossroads of cultures – close to Belgium, Germany and France – MU benefits on the influx of students from these regions. Although a small city, its rich culture, large international base and bustling night life are certainly a significant pull for potential students together with the unique features of MU itself.

The official mission of MU, as stated on its website is: *“Based in Europe, focused on the world. Maastricht University is a stimulating environment. Where research and teaching are complementary. Where innovation is our focus. Where talent can flourish. A truly student oriented research university.”(MU, 2011, ‘’Mission & Strategy’’ section,* ¶ 2)

The total amount of staff at MU is 3,538 employees, with 1,885 representing academic staff (of which 30% accounts for international academic staff). The total amount of students registered in all programmes of MU is 14,497; of which 400 currently attends the programme BA European Studies (MU, 2011, ‘’Facts and Figures’’ section, ¶ 1). The programme of BA European Studies is attended from 99% by students with a EU nationality, of which the biggest percentages of nationalities are represented by Germans, with 54%; Dutch, with 22%; and Belgians, with 6% (M. Lieshout, personal interview, April 18, 2011).

The unique approach towards teaching employed by Maastricht University is the Problem-Based Learning (PBL) system, which it employs since its foundation over 35 years ago (MU, 2011, ‘’About UM’’ section, ¶ 2). At MU, the education is always centered on the student. Students are taken as contributing members of the academic community and they work in small groups that together seek solutions to real world problems. This system motivates students to go deeper than memorization and a shallow understanding of concepts through their continuous exchange of knowledge, experiences and opinions between each other and with the academic staff. (MU, 2011, ‘’Problem-Based Learning’’, ¶ 1)

The programme BA European Studies was first offered in 2002 (M. Lieshout, personal interview, April 18, 2011). Currently it represents one of the three available BA programmes offered by the Faculty of Social Arts and Sciences of MU. With the option of a continuing Master’s programme in the same respective field, European Studies is an important component of the university which also attracts both local and international students with its distinctive teaching methodology and with English as its language of instruction. The students also have a choice of one foreign language to study.

# General Information Section

The following section contains introductory information on each of the benchmarked universities. Each of the universities has its own modus operandi and its own version of the undergraduate programme of European studies. For the purpose of introducing each university the following sections have been established for benchmarking: Mission, Profile, Size, History of the programme BA European Studies, Language of instruction, Teaching methodology.

With this section of the benchmarking comparisons will be made regarding similarities and differences in the teaching methodologies of universities, in which ways they are similar to that of Maastricht University, sizes of both student bodies and staff and the profiles of each of the universities.

Brief summary of the findings of this section can be located on page 20.

## University of Amsterdam

Mission

The mission statement of the University of Amsterdam is located on its main homepage and is notably easy to locate. As its mission, University of Amsterdam aims for a broadly oriented international academic environment where both staff and students can develop optimally. (UoA, 2011, ‘’About the UvA’’ section, ¶ 3)

Profile

University of Amsterdam was established in 1632 (UoA, 2011, ‘’About the UvA’’ section, ¶ 1). It currently consists of seven faculties and its staff publishes approximately 7500 scientific papers annually (A. Mars, telephone conversation, May 17, 2011). As a university, it places a large focus on its research; the total amount of doctorates in 2010 was 404 and it currently has 1036 doctoral candidates (UoA, 2011, ‘’Key Figures’’ section, ¶ 4). University of Amsterdam offers a selection of 59 Bachelor’s programmes, of which 1 is taught in English; 133 Master’s programmes, of which 58 are taught in English; and 10 postgraduate programmes (UoA, 2011, ‘’International Study Programmes’’ section, ¶ 1).

Size

As of 2010, University of Amsterdam employs 2850 academic staff, of which the biggest representation is employed by the Faculty of Economics and Business with 905 staff members and the Central Services with 877 staff members (UoA, 2011, ‘’Staff Numbers’’ section, ¶ 1). Non-academic staff accounts for 2285 employees (UoA, 2011, ‘’Staff Groups’’ section, ¶ 1). The total amount of registered students for 2010 was 32,739 (UoA, 2011, ‘’Total number of enrolled students’’ section, ¶ 1).

History of the programme BA European Studies

* The programme was established in 1983. The university does not employ and has never employed a numerus-fixus system for the admissions to this programme. As opposed to the other Dutch universities, the University of Amsterdam does not employ the use of Binding Study Advice during the first year of studies of the newly accepted students. The duration of the programme is 3 years. (A. Mars, personal e-mail, 12 July, 2011)
* The total amount of students in the BA European Studies programme was 669 in 2010. Out of the total amount of registered students at the university, this represents 2% of the total student intake. The students are in large majority of Dutch nationality mainly due to the language requirements of the programme. (A. Mars, personal e-mail, 12 July, 2011)

Language of instruction

The BA European Studies programme is taught entirely in Dutch language. Information provided on its website is also available completely in English, together with all the admission requirements but the programme itself is taught entirely in Dutch. It however offers the chance of studying English as a language and also provides its students with the option of studying abroad on an exchange in foreign languages. (A. Mars, personal e-mail, 12 July, 2011)

Teaching methodology

* The teaching methodology employed by University of Amsterdam consists of courses given in semesters of 21 weeks comprising of modules. Each module consists of Tutorials and Practical Training. In tutorials – seminars, students discuss assigned readings, complete assignments or write papers while in practical trainings the emphasis is placed on doing assignments rather than the study of theory. The form of practical trainings varies. (A. Mars, personal e-mail, 12 July, 2011)
* The system is different from the PBL-system employed by Maastricht University in its concentration on larger groups of students. The emphasis on theoretical and practical skills is however comparable with that of Maastricht University.
* The evaluation of the modules is done via class participation, oral presentations, assignments, final papers and final exams (A. Mars, personal e-mail, 12 July, 2011).The system of evaluation is identical to that employed by Maastricht University.

## University of Twente

Mission

The mission statement of University of Twente cannot be found on their website in a specific section, however their “Prospective Students” section explains its mission quite effectively by stating “The University of Twente is a research university which focuses on the development of technology and its impact on people and society. “ (UoT, 2011, ‘’Prospective Students’’ section, ¶1)

Profile

The university was established in 1961. Currently it offers a total of 24 Bachelor’s degrees and 31 Master’s degrees. From the 24 Bachelor’s programmes, 4 are taught completely in English with the rest taught completely in Dutch. It is currently attended by over 8 500 students. (R. Reussing, personal e-mail, 24 June, 2011)

Size

The university is considerably small as opposed to other reviewed universities. It is attended by 6000 Bachelor’s students and 2500 Master’s students. (R. Reussing, personal e-mail, 24 June, 2011)

History of the programme BA European Studies

* The programme was established in 2006 and is classified as a specialization of the Dutch taught Bachelor’s programme Public Administration.The programme of European Studies however differs from the programme of Public Administration in that it is concerned with the relation between the EU and its Member States as well as with other international organizations. The programme of Public Administration however focuses only on national administration. The duration of the programme is 3 years. (R. Reussing, personal e-mail, 24 June, 2011)
* From 2006 to 2008 there were 79, 107, and 117 students starting to study this programme. These numbers show an increase in the interest of applicants in this programme. The programme isn’t numerus-fixus organized. (R. Reussing, personal e-mail, 24 June, 2011)
* About one third of students drop out of the programme during its entire length. As for binding study advice, about 45% of the students pass all subjects of the first year within the first year. (R. Reussing, personal e-mail, 24 June, 2011)

Language of instruction

The programme is taught entirely in English language. It is not offered in Dutch language, however it is classified as a specialization of the programme Public Administration, which is offered in Dutch language.

Teaching methodology

The teaching methods seem similar to those of Maastricht university. The programme is taught in form of lectures, tutorials, projects and self-study. The groups are of similar sizes at both universities, with tutorials and projects consisting of small groups of 5 and more students on average. (R. Reussing, personal e-mail, 24 June, 2011)

## University of Oslo

Mission

The website of the university does not contain a section describing its mission. The current goal of the university can however be located in the strategic plan section:

“The University of Oslo will strengthen its international position as a leading research-intensive university through a close interaction across research, education, communication and innovation.” (UoO, 2011, ‘’Consultation document for UiO’s strategy 2010-2020’’, ¶ 19)

In this sense we can understand the university’s strategic goal as its current mission statement, aiming to improve its international recognition in terms of their research.

Profile

The University of Oslo was established in 1811 (C. Thorkildsen, telephone conversation, June 3, 2011). The university offers 41 Bachelor’s programmes and 51 Master’s programmes. Its bachelor’s programmes are offered only in Norwegian while a vast majority of the Master’s programmes is available in English (42). The total amount of staff working for the University is 7094; 3212 of which are academic staff. (Forskning, 2011, ‘’University of Oslo’’ section, ¶1)

Size

The university consists of 8 faculties and 3 museums. The current number of students attending the university is 27 700; 2823 of which are doctorate students. The number of doctorate graduates per year is 400 (Jacobs University, 2011, ‘’University of Oslo’’ section, ¶ 3).

History of the programme BA European Studies

* The programme was established in 2003. It is also offered to international students who as of yet are not fluent in Norwegian but are willing to spend an extra year to study the language prior to commencing their undergraduate studies. Yearly intake of students is limited to 60, with further restrictions concerning nationalities in talks as of December, 2011. The duration of the programme is 3 years. (C. Thorkildsen, telephone conversation, June 3, 2011)

Language of instruction

The course is offered only in Norwegian. It offers English classes but all students are required to be fluent in Norwegian.

Teaching methodology

* The programme is organized in similar fashion to the PBL-system employed by Maastricht University. Its modules are taught in form of lectures, tutorials, group work (projects) and self-study. The groups are of similar sizes at both universities, with tutorials and projects consisting of small groups of 5 (and more) students on average. Emphasis is placed on improving the critical thinking of students. (C. Thorkildsen, private e-mail, June 20, 2011)

## University Babes-Bolyai

Mission

The mission of University Babes-Bolyai can be located in the section ‘Mission’ of their webpage and is defined as: “University Babes-Bolyai is an academic educational public institution aiming to promote and sustain the development of specific cultural components within the local, regional, national and international community” (UBB, 2011, ‘’Mission’’ section, ¶1). As its mission, Babes-Bolyai’s main targets are domestic students, with special programmes taught in English targeted at international students. This is also visible in its mission statement, in which the main components listed are the “local, regional, national” community mentioned in front of the “international” community.

Profile

This university was established in 11th century and ranks among the best universities in Eastern Europe in terms of research (UBB, 2011, ‘’History’’ section, ¶1).It is situated in the town of Cluj-Napoca in Romania, and it offers 248 study programmes on BA and MA levels. From this number, 36 study programmes are taught entirely in English. Over 53 000 students are attending these programmes. (UBB, 2011, ‘’Students – UBB DATA’’ section, ¶1)

Size

The university consists of 21 faculties, with 10 university extensions. The university employs over 1700 academic staff. (R. Moldovan, telephone conversation, June 3, 2011)

History of the programme BA European Studies

* The programme was established in 1994, together with other new programme initiatives aimed at exploring the new integration methods in the contemporary world, and at increasing its multilingual and multicultural profile as a university (UBB, 2011, ‘’Faculty History’’ section, ¶1). The duration of the programme is 3 years (UBB, 2011, ‘’International Relations and European Studies’’ section, ¶5-6).

Language of instruction

The programme is taught entirely in English language. It is taught together with the International Relations component and therefore it is taught in an international language. The programme is however also offered in Romanian and German. Many of the university’s programmes are also taught in Hungarian and German language. (R. Moldovan, telephone conversation, June 3, 2011)

Teaching methodology

* The programme is organized in similar fashion to the PBL-system employed by Maastricht University. Its modules are taught in form of lectures, tutorials, projects and self-study. The groups are of similar sizes at both universities, with tutorials and projects consisting of small groups of 5 and more students on average. (R. Moldovan, telephone conversation, June 3, 2011)

## Universität Osnabrück

Mission

The official mission of Universität Osnabrück can be located in the section ‘New Programs’ of its website and is paraphrased as: ‘’In developing its programmes, the Universität Osnabrück places special emphasis on interdisciplinary and internationally oriented programmes. During the process, the University takes cues from current issues and problems, as well as the fields of research and subjects resulting from them. ‘’ (UO, 2011, ‘’New Programs’’ section, ¶1)

Profile

The Universität Osnabrück was established in 1973. The university offers 14 undergraduate programmes and 34 postgraduate programmes. The university’s staff consists of 870 academic personnel and 694 non-academic personnel. (Ch. Affeld, private e-mail, 7 July, 2011)

Size

The university consists of 10 faculties called departments. The university is currently attended by 9,300 students. (Ch. Affeld, private e-mail, 7 July, 2011)

History of the programme BA European Studies

* The programme was established in 2008. Applicants to the programme are chosen according to their A-level overall grade or equivalent diplomas due to high number of applicants. (Ch. Affeld, private e-mail, 7 July, 2011)
* The total amount of students in the BA European Studies programme was 146 in 2010. Out of the total amount of registered students at the university, this represents 1,5% of the total student intake. The students are in large majority of German nationality mainly due to the language requirements of the programme. The duration of the programme is 3 years. (Ch. Affeld, private e-mail, 7 July, 2011)

Language of instruction

The programme is taught primarily in German and partially in English. Students are expected to be able to read literature and present topics for discussion in English. Students have the option of taking English classes, with English lessons being a part of multiple minors as well. (Ch. Affeld, private e-mail, 7 July, 2011)

Teaching methodology

Universität Osnabrück chooses to adapt its methods of teaching to newly arising contemporary standards within the scientific and teaching community at universities. Its modules are in most cases taught in forms of lectures and practical or research trainings (Ch. Affeld, private e-mail, 7 July, 2011). In this respect, the current teaching methodology is largely similar, if not identical, to the one employed by Maastricht University.

## University of Southern Denmark

Mission

The University of Flensburg is dedicated to research, teaching and dissemination of knowledge. The main goal of the University of Southern Denmark is to be the University of Choice for students at both national and international level. (UoSD, 2011, ‘’Mission and Vision’’ section, ¶1)

Profile

The university was established in 1998 (UoSD, 2011, ‘’History’’ section, ¶1). The university offers 10 undergraduate programmes and 61 postgraduate programmes. All the aforementioned programmes are taught in English and oriented at recruiting international students (UoSD, 2011, ‘’Programmes’’ section, ¶1).

Size

The university consists of five faculties and is attended by over 20 000 students. The faculty of humanities, which also includes BA European Studies, is currently attended by 4200 students. (J. Jakobsen, private e-mail, 29 June, 2011)

History of the programme BA European Studies

* The programme BA ES was established in 1996. (J. Jakobsen, private e-mail, 29 June, 2011)
* The programme is offered by both the University of Flensburg and the University of Southern Denmark. In their agreement they have split the Bachelor’s part and the Master’s part of the programme in that they are taught in University of Southern Denmark and University of Flensburg respectively. Due to this arrangement, students finish their studies with a dual degree. The duration of the programme is 3 years. (J. Jakobsen, private e-mail, 29 June, 2011)

Language of instruction

The programme is offered entirely in English language.

Teaching methodology

* The teaching methodology of the University of Southern Denmark is largely different from the system employed by Maastricht University. Modules are organized into lectures, class instructions and individual supervision. Attendance of lectures is advised, but not required. (UoSD, 2011, ‘’Programme Structure’’ section, ¶1)

## University of Essex

Mission

The university’s mission is stated on its website, and is to be “a globally competitive, research-intensive, student-focused university that takes seriously its economic, social and cultural responsibilities to the Eastern region, the UK and the world.”(UoE, 2011, ‘’Strategy’’ section, ¶1). Its mission and vision statement is similar to that of other benchmarked universities in that it places a high emphasis on research and on the diversity of its student influx.

Profile

The university was founded in 1964. It consists of 4 faculties which are further split into 18 different departments. (UoE, 2011, ‘’About us’’ section, ¶1)

Size

The university is currently attended by more than 11 000 students who represent 130 different nationalities. Of those, 8 182 are undergraduates and 3 100 are postgraduate students. Out of the total number of students, 4 500 are international. The university employs 1 997 administrative staff members. (UoE, 2011, ‘’Key Statistics’’ section, ¶1)

History of the programme BA European Studies

* The programme is currently offered in three variants: BA European Studies and Modern Languages & BA European Studies with German/French/Italian/Spanish & BA European Studies with Politics. (UoE, 2011, ‘’Course Finder’’ section)
* The difference between variants is solely in the foreign language modules. In the first variant, the extra module concentrates on history and evolution of modern languages, the second focuses on one specific language, while the third allows student to focus more on politics rather than to take a foreign language. The duration of the programme is 4 years. (UoE, 2011, ‘’Course Finder’’ section)
* The programme is attended by an average of 15 students annually (UoE Switchboard, telephone conversation, 20 June, 2011).

Language of instruction

The programme is offered entirely in English language. Students have to study one extra foreign language during the course of the programme or they can choose to study 2 modern foreign languages in a different track. (UoE, 2011, ‘’BA European Studies’’ section, ¶2)

Teaching methodology

The BA European Studies is taught in form of lectures and classes. Each module is taught on a 1 lecture and 1 class per week basis. Lectures divide students into smaller groups while classes are taught in larger groups of 20 and above students. This system is quite comparable to the PBL system of teaching employed by Maastricht University, although still tends to be more theoretically oriented. Students are assessed by coursework throughout the year and end-of-year examinations. The main difference in teaching methodology, as opposed to that of Maastricht University, is a large focus on expertise in modern languages, literature and film; rather than only on politics, economics, skills and languages. (UoE, 2011, ‘’BA European Studies’’ section, ¶3)

## King’s College London

Mission

The mission statement of King’s College London (henceforth referenced as KCL) can be located on its webpage. As its mission, KCL is dedicated to the advancement of knowledge, learning and understanding in the service of society. As opposed to other benchmarked universities, KCL’s official mission statement does not focus on research but rather on providing education as a service to society. (KCL, 2011, ‘’Mission and Strategy’’ section, ¶1)

Profile

KCL was established in 1828 by a group of important public figures, such as politicians or clergy.69 It currently consists of 9 faculties and its research staff amounts to 2800 researchers. KCL propagates itself as one of the top 30 leading universities in the world and stresses its research as well, with over ₤147 million income from its research annually (KCL, 2011, ‘’King’s by Numbers’’ section, ¶8-10).KCL offers a selection of 88 undergraduate programmes and 282 postgraduate programmes in total. (KCL, 2011, ‘’Find a programme’’ section)

Size

As of 2011, KCL employs over 6 000 administrative staff members. The total amount of registered students in 2011 is 23 500, of whom nearly 9 000 are graduate students and over 14 500 are undergraduate students. These students represent in total 150 various nationalities (complete statistics available on their website). (KCL, 2011, ‘’At a Glance’’ section, ¶1)

History of the programme BA European Studies & International Studies

* The programme was established in 1992. It admits approximately 36 students annually. Main focuses of the programme are European politics, history, society, language and culture. The programme’s duration is typically 4 years with an option of possible study delay of 1 year. (KCL Switchboard, telephone conversation, 20 June, 2011).

Language of instruction

The BA European Studies is taught entirely in English language. The programme also offers its students a choice of one or more foreign languages to study (KCL, 2011, ‘’BA European Studies’’ section, ¶1).

Teaching methodology

Teaching at King’s College London takes in most modules the form of lectures and seminars, as opposed to the PBL system of Maastricht University, although KCL stresses the option of discussing key issues and concepts in small groups of students, similar to the PBL system employed by Maastricht University. In addition, it also offers its students the option of enhancing their degree by taking additional programmes and projects of their choice. (KCL, 2011, ‘’BA European Studies’’ section, ¶1-4)

## University of Birmingham

Mission

The mission of University of Birmingham is stated in its Strategic Framework. In the Strategic Framework it is stated that the University aims to be a leading global university. It aims to achieve that goal through the use of 5 strategic goals (UoB, 2011, ‘’Collaborative Provision Policy’’, ¶7), namely to:

* + Enhance own research power
	+ Provide own students with a distinctive, high-quality experience
	+ Sustain own financial strength
	+ Enchance own performance
	+ Be the choice of destination among peers

Profile

The university was established in 1900 and was the first English civic university (UoB, 2011, ‘’A Brief History’’ section, ¶1). It offers 286 variants of undergraduate programmes and 633 variants of postgraduate programmes. (UoB, 2011, ‘’Course Finder’’ section)

Size

The university is in total attended by 26 831 students, of which 18 124 are undergraduate students and 6 101 postgraduate students. Out of 26 831 students, over 4 500 are international. (UoB, 2011, ‘’Who studies here?’’ section, ¶3)

History of the programme BA European Studies and Modern languages

* The programme focuses on studying European history and culture, with an emphasis on at least 1 foreign language, which student studies to Honours level. The focus is mostly however placed on analysing culture, with modules oriented on politics offered in the third and fourth years. The duration of the programme is 4 years. (UoB, 2011, ‘’BA Modern Languages and European Studies’’ section, ¶3)
* The programme is attended by an average of 20 students annually (UoB Switchboard, telephone conversation, 20 June, 2011).

Language of instruction

The BA European Studies is taught entirely in English language. The programme also requires its students a choice of one or more foreign languages to study (UoB, 2011, ‘’BA Modern Languages and European Studies’’ section, ¶3).

Teaching methodology

The University of Birmingham employs the use of enquiry-based learning, which is an approach which can combine elements from the problem-based learning, evidence-based learning, field work, projects or research. Compared to the PBL-system, they both employ the use of larger sized lectures for theoretical knowledge and smaller sized classes for case analysis and critical thinking for each module. (UoB, 2011, ‘’Enquiry Based Learning’’ section, ¶1-4)

1. Conclusion**:**

The universities, while different in profiles and sizes, all employ a largely similar version of the undergraduate programme of European Studies. The focus on learning 1 foreign language next to the typical socio-cultural and political topics is employed by each university. While teaching methodology of University of Amsterdam, University of Southern Denmark and University of Essex differs slightly from that of Maastricht University in the ways of module organisation; the core values of the subjects that the universities hope to instil in their students are the same: critical thinking, equal proficiency in theory and practice and focus on foreign languages.

The language of instruction of the programme at majority of the benchmarked universities is English. While University of Amsterdam and Universität Osnabrück chose to focus on recruiting largely domestic students with this method, the University of Oslo provides the unique approach of organizing pre-undergraduate Norwegian language studies to also allow international students to join the programme despite the language requirement. ,

The summary of the findings from this section can be viewed in **Table .1**.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Table .1** | Amount of students in the programme BA European Studies | % of the total amount of students | Teaching methodology similar to MU | Language of instruction | Years of study |
| University of Amsterdam | 669 | 2% | No | Dutch | 3 |
| University of Twente | 303 | 4% | Yes | English | 3 |
| University of Oslo | 180 | 0.6% | Yes | Norwegian | 3 |
| University Babes-Bolyai | N/A | N/A | Yes | English | 3 |
| Universität Osnabrück | 146 | 1.5% | Yes | German | 3 |
| University of Southern Denmark | N/A | N/A | No | English | 4 |
| University of Essex | 60 | 0.5% | No | English | 4 |
| King’s College London | 144 | 0.6% | Yes | English | 4 |
| University of Birmingham | 80 | 0.3% | Yes | English | 4 |
| Maastricht University | 400 | 3% | - | English | 3 |
|  |  |  |  | \*(N/A = Not Available) |

# Admission requirements

Admission requirements are among the first factors that a potential applicant considers prior to applying. For this reason the admission requirements of universities were benchmarked according to the following criteria in order to provide a comparative view:

* Manner of submitting the application, whether the application is submitted directly to the university or whether it is required to be submitted through independent virtual networks.
* Requirements for students, including all documents required of each applicant
* Application costs, or any costs associated with the application procedure
* Deadline for application

Results of this benchmarking can be found in **Table .2**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Table .2** | **Handling of application** | **Requirements for EU students** | **Requirements for non-EU students** | **Application costs** | **Deadline for application** |
| **University of Amsterdam 1** | - Both online & afterwards by post | - Level of education comparable to VWO- Knowledge of Dutch language  | - Level of education comparable to VWO- Knowledge of Dutch language - Visa application- English proficiency exam(TOEFL/IETLS/CAE) | - 100 EUR | **EU:**1.6.**Non-EU:**1.3. |
| **University of Twente 2** | - Both online & afterwards by post | - Level of education comparable to VWO | - Level of education comparable to VWO- Visa application | N/A | **EU:**1.6.**Non-EU:**1.5. |
| **University of Oslo 3** | - Both online & afterwards by post- Foreign applicants need to take a course of Norwegian organized by the university prior to commencement of studies | - High-school diploma- Knowledge of Norwegian language | - Visa application- High-school diploma- Knowledge of Norwegian language or 1-year course- English proficiency exam (TOEFL/IELTS/CAE) | N/A | **Norwegian**:15.4.**Foreign:**1.3. |
| **University Babes-Bolyai 4** | - Only by post |  **All students are required to submit:**-Certified copies of the following documents: high-school diploma, transcript of grades, birth certificate- Medical certificate proving applicant is healthy- Passport copy- Application form- Visa application | - 50 EUR | 10.8. |
| **Universität Osnabrück 5** | - Online through uni-assist & afterwards in person, through Admissions Office | **All students are required to submit:**-Certified copies of the following documents: high-school diploma, transcript of grades, birth certificate- Medical certificate proving applicant is healthy- Passport copy and an extra picture- Application form- Visa application | N/A | 15.6. |
| **University of Southern Denmark 6** | - Only by post | - High-school diploma- Transcript of grades | - High-school diploma- Transcript of grades- English proficiency exam (TOEFL/IELTS)- Visa application | **Only non-EU:**- 216 EUR(inc. residence permit) | 15.3. |
| **University of Essex 7** | - Both online & afterwards by post | **UK applicants:****-** two full A-levels or equivalent- level 3 advanced diploma**Foreign applicants:**- foreign diplomas equivalent to two full A-levels- Visa application- English proficiency exam | N/A | 15.1. |
| **King’s College London 8** | - Both online & afterwards by post | **UK applicants:****-** two full A-levels or equivalent**Foreign applicants:**- foreign diplomas equivalent to two full A-levels- Visa application- English proficiency exam | N/A | 15.1. |
| **University of Birmingham 9** | - Both online & afterwards by post | **All applicants:**- Three GCE A levels or equivalent- If not a native speaker, English proficiency exam- Visa application | N/A | 15.1. |
| **Maastricht University 10** | - Both online & afterwards by post | - Level of education comparable to VWO | - Level of education comparable to VWO- Visa application- English proficiency exam (TOEFL/IETLS/CAE) | N/A | **EU:**1.8.**Non-EU:**1.4. |

As can be seen in **Table .2**, the admission requirements for potential applicants were largely similar across all benchmarked universities. Handling of applications is mostly handled both online and afterwards by post by majority of the universities, with University Babes-Bolyai and University of Southern Denmark being the only universities which only require of its applicants to submit an application directly with them through post or direct contact.

Requirements for applicants are shared by majority of the benchmarked universities, with all universities requiring a pre-university secondary education finished with matriculation. The exception to this requirement are the British universities: University of Essex, King’s College London and University of Birmingham; which require of its applicants to also have finished their matriculation with the minimum grades of 75% (in the case of University of Essex and King’s College London), or 85% (in the case of University of Birmingham). Other requirements include knowledge of the destination country’s language in case of University of Amsterdam, University of Oslo and Universität Osnabrück due to their language of instruction not being English; and English proficiency exams in case of universities where the language of instruction is English. The only exception in the last requirement is University of Twente, which does not require a copy of the results from the English proficiency exams of its applicants. The requirement of a medical certificate proving good health state of the applicant is only required by Universität Osnabrück and University Babes-Bolyai, and is required of both local and foreign applicants.

Application fee is charged only by three of the benchmarked universities, with University of Southern Denmark charging the highest amount of 216 EUR, University of Amsterdam charging 100 EUR and University Babes-Bolyai charging 50 EUR.

Deadlines for application varied with each university, with the British universities all having the earliest deadline of 15.1., and Maastricht University and University Babes-Bolyai having the latest deadlines of 1.8. and 10.8. respectively. As for differentiating between EU and non-EU applicant deadlines; only the University Babes-Bolyai, Universität Osnabrück, University of Southern Denmark and the British universities do not provide different deadlines for local EU students (or Norwegian in case of the University of Oslo), and non-EU students.

# Promotional activities

The following chapter contains the comparison of various promotional activities directed at potential applicants, which are meant to provide them with answers to any questions that the applicants might have concerning their future studies. The events benchmarked are either publicly announced on the respective universities’ websites, or advertised through direct contact by the universities’ recruitment departments. Potential applicants often turn to the recruitment departments of universities’ in regards to events such as Student for a day, hoping to gain a first-hand experience with the university they wish to apply for. For the purpose of benchmarking these promotional activities, individual universities were enquired about any and all promotional activities that they offer to potential applicants in order to aid them in selecting their university of choice.

University of Amsterdam

* **Open Days**
	+ UvA organizes 2 Open Day events annually, typically in spring and autumn. These events are attended on average by 120 visitors each. Visitors are not required to register prior to attending an Open Day. (A. Mars, personal e-mail, 12 July, 2011)
* **Student for a day**
	+ UvA organizes events identical to the Student for a day event employed by Maastricht University. Potential applicants have the choice of following a selected student during a school day, accompanying them both to classes and for a guided tour around the university. (A. Mars, personal e-mail, 12 July, 2011)
* **Study Fairs**
	+ UvA focuses its recruitment activities for BA European Studies only in the Netherlands in autumn each year. This is due to the language requirements of the course. (A. Mars, personal e-mail, 12 July, 2011)
* **Promotional materials**
	+ Brochures for the programme are available for download on the website of BA European Studies. While selecting to download the specific brochure, visitor is also offered a list of other available brochures.

University of Twente

* **Open Days**
	+ University of Twente organizes 3 Open Day events annually. Visitors are not required to register prior to attending an Open Day. (R. Reussing, personal e-mail, 24 June, 2011)
* **Student for a day**
	+ Identical to Student for a day event employed by Maastricht University. Potential applicants are meant to apply for a Student for a day event through a link on the website. (R. Reussing, personal e-mail, 24 June, 2011)
* **Promotional materials**
	+ Brochures for the programme are available to be downloaded by visitors of the website through a link on the website.

University of Oslo

* **Open Days**
	+ The university organizes 2 open days annually. Visitors are not required to register prior to attending an Open Day. (C. Thorkildsen, telephone conversation, June 3, 2011)
* **Tour**
	+ The university does not mention a possibility of visiting the campus, attending sample classes or having a student representative for a guide. It is however possible to contact the representatives of the faculty through visitor’s own initiative in order to visit the university. Meeting academic staff is not guaranteed. (C. Thorkildsen, telephone conversation, June 3, 2011)
* **Promotional materials**
	+ Brochures can be requested by e-mail. Brochures of the European Studies faculty are only available in Norwegian language and contain information identical to the website.

University Babes-Bolyai

* **Open Days**
	+ Open Days are organized only on faculty level and in Romanian language, as the primary targeted audience are Romanian students. Each faculty organizes 2 Open Day events on average annually. Visitors are not require to register prior to attending. (R. Moldovan, telephone conversation, November 15, 2011)
* **Tour**
	+ Potential students may request a personal visit accompanied either by non-academic staff or a student representatives. The request may or may not be granted. (R. Moldovan, telephone conversation, November 15, 2011)
* **Promotional materials**
	+ Brochures are only available in Romanian language and to be requested by an e-mail. (R. Moldovan, telephone conversation, November 15, 2011)

Universität Osnabrück

* **Open Days**
	+ The university organizes 1 Open Day event each year. Visitors are not require to register prior to attending. (Ch. Affeld, telephone conversation, November 15, 2011)
* **Tour**
	+ Potential students may request a personal visit of academic staff directly by contacting the staff. The request may or may not be granted. (Ch. Affeld, telephone conversation, November 15, 2011)
* **Promotional materials**
	+ Brochures are available on the website.

University of Southern Denmark

* **Open Days**
	+ University of Southern Denmark organizes 3 Open Day events annually. Visitors are not required to register prior to attending an Open Day. (J. Jakobsen, telephone conversation, 15 November, 2011)
* **Student for a day**
	+ Identical to Student for a day event employed by Maastricht University. Option is not referenced on the website. Only possible upon individual enquiry through contacting the Student Recruitment office of the University. (J. Jakobsen, telephone conversation, 15 November, 2011)
* **Promotional materials**
	+ Brochures are not offered on the website. It is however possible for them to be sent via e-mail upon request. (J. Jakobsen, telephone conversation, 15 November, 2011)
	+ The website of the university offers a Study Guide for download on its homepage, which contains information aimed at helping students prepare for the start of their studies and a new life in a new city.

University of Essex

* **Open Days**
	+ Potential visitors are required to register on the website of the university prior to attending. Open Day events are organized twice a year. (UoE Switchboard, telephone conversation, 21 November, 2011).
* **Tours**
	+ University of Essex does not offer the option of following a student around the university. It instead offers a guided tour of the campus, which may or may not guarantee a chance at seeing a class in progress and/or the chance of talking to the academic staff. This is also explained to potential visitors when they register for this event through e-mail or by telephone. (UoE Switchboard, telephone conversation, 21 November, 2011).
* **Virtual tour**
	+ The webpage of the university also contains a virtual version of the tour of the campus.
* **Promotional materials**
	+ Brochures (prospectus) can be downloaded directly on the website.

King’s College London

* **Open Days**
	+ Potential visitors are required to register on the website of the university prior to attending. Open Day events are organized twice a year. (KCL Switchboard, telephone conversation, 21 November, 2011)
* **Tours**
	+ Tours are organised on a regular basis. Tours are held on Wednesday and Friday each week and are led by a student ambassador. Potential visitors are required to register for the event by contacting the university by e-mail. (KCL Switchboard, telephone conversation, 21 November, 2011)
* **Self-guided tours**
	+ Offered as an alternative to visitors on a busy time schedule. Visitors interested in self-guided tours are required to register at reception upon their arrival. (KCL Switchboard, telephone conversation, 21 November, 2011)
* **Virtual tour**
	+ The webpage of the university also contains a virtual version of the tour of the campus.
* **Promotional materials**
	+ Brochures (prospectus) can be downloaded directly on the website. Other types of brochures are not available.

University of Birmingham

* **Open Days**
	+ Potential visitors are required to register on the website of the university prior to attending. Open Day events are organized twice a year. (UoB Switchboard, telephone conversation, 21 November, 2011)
* **Tours**
	+ Tours are organised on a regular basis. Tours are held on Tuesday and Thursday each week. Potential visitors are required to register for the event by contacting the university by e-mail. (UoB Switchboard, telephone conversation, 21 November, 2011)
* **Applicant visit day**
	+ Applicant visit day is organized 13 times during the school year. It consists of the following events (UoB Switchboard, telephone conversation, 21 November, 2011):
		- Campus tour
		- Accommodation tour by bus
		- Optional meeting with Study funding staff
		- Presentation
* **Promotional materials**
	+ Brochures (prospectus) can be downloaded directly on the website.
	+ FAQ section containing the most frequently asked questions concerning open days and tours offered by the university.

Maastricht University

* **Open Days**
	+ The faculty of social arts and sciences, which BA ES is a part of, currently organizes 2 Open Day events annually. It is preferred for visitors to register for the Open Day prior to attending, but not required. (M. Lieshout, private interview, 14 April, 2011)
* **Student for a day**
	+ Potential applicants have the choice of following a selected student during a school day, accompanying them both to classes and for a guided tour around the university. (M. Lieshout, private interview, 14 April, 2011)
* **Experience day**
	+ An event alike a tour, MU offers entire classes of secondary education the chance to take a tour through the university with the chance to observe lectures as well. (M. Lieshout, private interview, 14 April, 2011)
* **Promotional materials**
	+ Brochures are available both in print and digital form upon either contacting the university directly, or through requesting one via the university’s website.

**Conclusion:**

Concerning the weight of criteria, same weights were assigned to each benchmarked category, as each of the categories bears the same weight to an applicant in search of more information concerning his future studies. Maastricht University ranked as the best in this chapter, gaining advantage as the only university which offers the option of mailing hard copies of promotional materials to its potential applicants, as well as being one of the two benchmarked universities which focuses on promoting its BA European Studies programme on international study fairs, while also providing applicants with both an option of joining the Student for a day programme as well as offering its own version of a campus tour. Other innovative promotional activities which deserve a mention are the superior tours and virtual tours of the British universities, as opposed to the other benchmarked universities.

The summary of the ranking can be viewed in **Table .3**.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Table .3** | **University of Amsterdam** | **University of Twente** | **University of Oslo** | **University Babes-Bolyai** | **Universität Osnabrück** | **University of Southern Denmark** | **University of Essex** | **King’s College London** | **University of Birmingham** | **Maastricht University** |
| Open Day | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Student fora day | ✓ | ✓ | 🗶 | 🗶 | 🗶 | ✓ | 🗶 | 🗶 | 🗶 | ✓ |
| Study fairs | ✓ | 🗶 | 🗶 | 🗶 | 🗶 | 🗶 | 🗶 | 🗶 | 🗶 | ✓ |
| Brochures (online) | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Brochures (hard copy) | 🗶 | 🗶 | 🗶 | 🗶 | 🗶 | 🗶 | 🗶 | 🗶 | 🗶 | ✓ |
| Tours | 🗶 | 🗶 | 🗶 | 🗶 | 🗶 | 🗶 | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Virtual tours | 🗶 | 🗶 | 🗶 | 🗶 | 🗶 | 🗶 | ✓ | ✓ | 🗶 | 🗶 |
| **Rank** | **2nd - 4th**  | **5th - 7th** | **8th- 10th**  | **8th - 10th** | **8th- 10th** | **5th -7th** | **2nd - 4th** | **2nd - 4th** | **5th - 7th**  | **1st**  |

# Money matters

## Tuition fees

The programme BA European Studies is offered by the various universities for a wide range of prices. This section will contain a comparison of these fees, the difference in prices on the grounds of nationalities and a summary of any additional admission costs that may occur.

As can be seen in the statistics, almost each of the benchmarked universities charges a different amount for EU and non-EU students, with the exception of University of Oslo which remains free for students of all nationalities and Universität Osnabrück which charges the same amount for all nationalities. The only processing fees of any kind that are required at the University of Oslo, and which are related to tuition fees, are the registration fees (C. Thorkildsen, telephone conversation, June 3, 2011).

At all of the benchmarked universities, the tuition fees reflect only the price of tuition and in neither of the cases does it include the price of books, accommodation or any other significant expenses that a potential student will have to make. As majority of the benchmarked universities are located within Western Europe, the average living costs referenced on respective universities’ websites are largely similar and reach between 800-900 EUR/month on average. The average living costs in Norway, as estimated by the University of Oslo, reach between 1100-1200 EUR/month on average (UoO, 2011, ‘’Budget and Cost of Living’’ section, ¶1). The University Babes-Bolyai has an advantage in the living costs, with average living costs estimated at 300-600 EUR/month in its city of Cluj-Napoca (UBB, 2011, ‘’Why UBB’’ section, ¶8).

For a full comparison of tuition fees, please refer to **Table .4**.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Table .4** | **The price for BA****European Studies****for EU student****(annually / in EUR)** | **The price for BA****European Studies****for non-EU student****(annually / in EUR)** | **Any additional costs for the student?** | **Rank** |
| **University of****Amsterdam 11** | 1,713 EUR | 9,000 EUR |  | **7th** |
| **University of****Twente 12** | 1,713 EUR | 7,000 EUR |  | **5th** |
| **University of****Oslo 13** | 0 EUR | 0 EUR | Semester registrationfee: €56Copy fee: €13 | **1st** |
| **University Babes-Bolyai 14** | 1,155 EUR | 2,310 EUR |  | **3rd** |
| **Universitat****Osnabruck 15** | 1,000 EUR | 1,000 EUR |  | **2nd** |
| **University of****Southern****Denmark 16** | 0 EUR | 6,500 EUR |  | **4th** |
| **University of****Essex 17** | 3,820 EUR | 12,100 EUR |  | **8th** |
| **King’s College****London 18** | 10,100 EUR | 15,000 EUR |  | **10th** |
| **University of****Birmingham 19** | 3,720 EUR | 12,800 EUR |  | **9th** |
| **Maastricht****University 20** | 1,713 EUR | 8,500 EUR | - | **6th** |

Average living costs may vary with individuals, with each student spending various amount of money on both accommodation and other living costs such as groceries and social life. Tuition fees are however set, and must be followed by each student. For this purpose, ranks were assigned based solely on the amount of tuition fees. The best ranked university in this category is University of Oslo, with no tuition fees for its students and with only minor costs regarding the registration costs. The second best ranked university in this category is Universität Osnabrück, which charges a set amount of 1,000 EUR per a year of studies for all nationalities. The British universities ranked as the last universities, with King’s College London charging the largest amount of tuition fees of its students.

## Scholarships and grants

The benchmarking of the following section is based on the amount of scholarships available to new students of BA European Studies at each of the benchmarked universities. The scholarships which will be benchmarked in this section needed to reach the following criteria: they needed to be offered directly by the university and had to be available to international students of BA European Studies. Each university lists among its possible scholarships also scholarships financed by various national organisations, e.g. Nuffic/IB-Groep scholarships advertised by the Dutch universities. These types of scholarships have been omitted from the benchmarking due to them being offered at a national level, rather than by a specific university. The exception to this are the British universities, and namely the National Scholarship Programme (furthermore referred to as NSP), which while distributed at a national level to all three universities is also set at a specific amount for each, enabling the universities to decide which students to pick themselves. As the scholarship is currently only in the process of being implemented, specific criteria for its awarding are still unknown. (UoE, 2011, ‘’National Scholarship Programme’’ section, ¶1)

University of Amsterdam

University of Amsterdam does not offer any scholarships to its international undergraduate students (UoA, 2011, ‘’UvA Scholarships’’ section).

University of Twente

University of Twente does not offer any scholarships to its international undergraduate students (UoT, 2011, ‘’Scholarships & Grants’’ section).

University of Oslo

As University of Oslo does not charge any tuition fees it also does not offer any scholarships to its international undergraduate students (C. Thorkildsen, telephone conversation, November 14, 2011).

University Babes-Bolyai

UBB offers only 1 type of scholarship available to international undergraduate students, the Olympic Merit scholarship, granted to first-year students who have previously received awards at international School Olympics (UBB, 2011, ‘’Scholarships’’ section).

Universität Osnabrück

Universität Osnabrück does not offer any scholarships to its international undergraduate students (UO, 2011, ‘’Stipendien’’ section).

University of Southern Denmark

The university does not offer any scholarships to its international undergraduate students (UoSD, 2011, ‘’Scholarships’’ section).

University of Essex

University of Essex offers only NSP scholarship to its undergraduate students. The university offers a scholarship of £2,000 to 200 of its first-year undergraduate students. In addition to this, the university also offers 1 types of bursary to its international undergraduate students, the Refugee Bursary, which is available to undergraduates with refugee status and which is worth up to £1,000. (UoE, 2011, ‘’Scholarships and Bursaries for Undergraduates’’ section)

King’s College London

King’s College London offers 1 type of scholarship in addition to NSP, the King’s myScholarship. King’s myScholarship is available to 120 students and is worth £1,800. The students are picked according to their study results and contributions to the department, or College in general. NSP scholarships are available to 116 students at King’s College London, and are worth £6,000 each. (KCL, 2011, ‘’Bursaries & Scholarships’’ section)

University of Birmingham

University of Birmingham offers only the NSP scholarship to its international undergraduate students. NSP scholarships at University of Birmingham are available to a currently undisclosed amount of students, and will be worth £3,000 each. (UoB, 2011, ‘’Scholarships, Grants and Bursaries’’ section)

Maastricht University

Maastricht University does not offer any scholarships to its international undergraduate students. (MU, 2011, ‘’Find Your Scholarship’’ section)

The findings of the benchmarking of scholarships can be viewed in **Table .5** and are meant for orientation purposes.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Table .5** | **Scholarships available to international BA students** |
| University of Amsterdam | 🗶 |
| University of Twente | 🗶 |
| University of Oslo | 🗶 |
| University Babes-Bolyai | ✓ |
| Universität Osnabrück | 🗶 |
| University of Southern Denmark | 🗶 |
| University of Essex | ✓ |
| King’s College London | ✓ |
| University of Birmingham | ✓ |
| Maastricht University  | 🗶 |

# Websites

Websites are an integral part of the student recruitment procedure. Potential students in most cases obtain the first information on their future universities through internet. In the contemporary times, when studying abroad is becoming more and more common, possessing an attractive website can make the difference between gaining a new student or being deemed uninteresting by that student.

For this reason I believe that the following 3 main categories are the most important aspects of a website, as being judged by a prospective student: content, access availability and design.

Content category comprises of the following sub-categories: statistics, list of modules & credits, vital information. For statistics, I focused my analysis on statistics relevant to student numbers, award-winning alumni, and international/domestic rankings of the relevant university. For the module sub-category I focused my analysis on whether the webpage clearly states which modules will be taught in the programme and their respective ECTS awarded. Vital information analysis consisted of analysing in what manner the relevant webpage provides information on tuition fees, scholarship options and visa & application requirements.

Access availability as a category is meant to reflect the ease by which a visitor is able to find the information relevant to the undergraduate degree at the desired university’s webpage. The grade for this category was reached by analysing whether the website is listed on other search engines and the user-friendliness of the respective university’s website. The search engines analysed were [www.bachelorsportal.eu](http://www.bachelorsportal.eu) and [www.xstudy.eu](http://www.xstudy.eu), the two educational search portals listed on the website of European Commission as advised for use for students. User-friendliness of the websites was graded on a comparative basis and focusing on the ease with which the desired sections on BA European Studies can be reached by a first-time visitor.

Design was judged also on a comparative basis and analysed specifically for innovative design traits and tones of the respective websites.

Fourth category, entitled Additional information, was added to grade the sum of any additional information of possible important value to a visitor interested in an undergraduate degree in European Studies.

Each category was graded on a 0 – 10 point basis, with 0 being the lowest amount of points possible and 10 being the highest. Grades were established through comparative critical review of positive and negative attributes of each category. The sub-categories of each category were then used to make an average grade for their respective categories.

The final score of each university’s website was afterwards obtained through assigning a weight to each of the categories and summing the results in order to obtain the final score. The three primary categories of Content, Access availability and Design were each awarded the weight of 30%, with Additional information being awarded the weight of 10%. This was due to its nature of being supplementary information which, while not deemed an essential category, may still have impact on the visitor’s perception of the website. Ranks were then awarded based on the resulting scores.

The final results of this benchmarking can be viewed in **Table .6**. For a full and descriptive analysis of each website and each benchmarked category, please refer to **Appendix A)**.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Score** |  |  |
| **Table .6** | **Content** | **Access availability** | **Design** | **Additional information** | **Total****score** | **Rank** |
| **University of Amsterdam** | **6,3** | **6,5** | **7** | **8,5** | **6,79** | **5th**  |
| **University of Twente** | **6,6** | **6,5** | **6,5** | **8** | **6,68** | **6th**  |
| **University of Oslo** | **6** | **2,5** | **6,5** | **8** | **5,3** | **8th**  |
| **University Babes-Bolyai** | **3** | **4,5** | **4** | **9** | **4,35** | **10th**  |
| **Universität Osnabrück** | **3,6** | **8** | **2** | **6,5** | **4,73** | **9th**  |
| **University of Southern Denmark** | **5,6** | **6,5** | **6** | **8** | **6,23** | **7th**  |
| **University of Essex** | **6** | **8,5** | **8** | **7** | **7,45** | **2nd**  |
| **King’s College London** | **4,6** | **9** | **7,5** | **8** | **7,13** | **3rd**  |
| **University of Birmingham** | **8,5** | **9** | **9** | **7,5** | **8,7** | **1st**  |
| **Maastricht University** | **7,6** | **6,5** | **6** | **9** | **6,93** | **4th**  |

# Campus accommodation

For most international students, the beginning of their Bachelor studies also marks the first time they will live away from home. For that reason, the ability of the University to provide accommodation for a student, either on the campus or in cooperation with a housing corporation does have the potential to prove attractive to applicants looking for a University. The benchmarking of this category took in account whether the university provides campus accommodation, if the accommodation is guaranteed to all international students and also whether the university works exclusively with any specific housing corporations.

University of Amsterdam

There is no campus accommodation for the students. The university offers contacts with housing agencies, but accommodation is deemed as a responsibility of the students. (UoA, 2011, ‘’How to Find a Room on the Private Market’’ section, ¶1)

University of Twente

The university houses a large campus, composing of 7 various housing complexes. Campus is available to a limited number of places. Students need to enter a waiting list in order to receive accommodation. They will be informed of an available spot when they move high enough in the list of waiting students. (UoT, 2011, ‘’Living on Campus’’ section, ¶1)

University of Oslo

All international students are guaranteed with a place of accommodation in one of multiple student residences handled by a partner company of the university. National students are provided with an accommodation based on the distance of their permanent residence. (UoO, 2011, ‘’Student Housing’’ section, ¶1)

University Bolyai-Babes

The university campus is available to a limited number of places. Students may apply for a place at the campus after they receive the Letter of Acceptance. (UBB, 2011, ‘’Student Housing’’ section, ¶1)

University of Osnabruck

University of Osnabruck doesn’t offer accommodation to its students. It provides contacts with housing agencies, but accommodation is deemed as a responsibility of a student and is advised to be taken as such on their website as well. (UO, 2011, ‘’Wohnen’’ section, ¶1)

University of Southern Denmark

The University of Southern Denmark offers off-campus housing to all international students. The students have a choice of seeking a private accommodation or living in one of the student halls. The student halls are a part of the university’s property. (UoSD, 2011, ‘’Housing’’ section, ¶2)

University of Essex

The university offers a place at the campus for all students. (UoE, 2011, ‘’Accommodation Essex’’ section, ¶3)

King’s College London

Majority of students of KCL live in private accommodations, however the college offers its students a selection of 8 student halls located close to the college’s teaching facilities. (KCL, 2011, ‘’Applying or Accommodation’’ section, ¶4)

University of Birmingham

The University of Birmingham offers a large variety of student halls and apartments for its students. It also offers a detailed guide to these accommodations on its website together with all details concerning the accommodations and their registrations. Students also have the choice of seeking a private accommodation. (UoB, 2011, ‘’Apply Online’’ section, ¶2)

Maastricht University

Maastricht University does not offer campus accommodation for its students. It does however aid students in obtaining accommodation on their own through providing them with contacts for several housing agencies which specialise in student housing. (MU, 2011, ‘’Living on Your Own’’ section, ¶4)

The findings of the benchmarking of campus accommodation can be viewed in **Table .7** and are meant for orientation purposes.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Table .7** | **Campus accommodation** | **Guaranteed places for international students?** | **Private accommodation with university’s partner** |
| **University of Amsterdam** | None | N/A | Yes |
| **University of Twente** | Yes, limited | No | No |
| **University of Oslo** | Yes | Yes | No |
| **University Babes-Bolyai** | Yes, limited | No | No |
| **Universität Osnabrück** | None | N/A | Yes |
| **University of S.Denmark** | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| **University of Essex** | Yes | Yes | No |
| **King’s College London** | Yes | No | No |
| **University of Birmingham** | Yes | No | No |
| **Maastricht University**  | None | N/A | Yes |
|  |  |  | \*(N/A = Not Applicable) |

# Rankings

The universal ranking system in higher education is a new phenomenon in the 21st century. Universities often present themselves with the international rankings in which they are highly ranked. (Hogskoleverket, 2011, ‘’Ranking of universities and higher education institutions for student information purposes?’’ report, ¶1)

Rankings are often viewed by prospective students during their process of selecting which universities to apply for. Various ranking systems use different criteria to research and decide upon the ranking of universities. While some focus on research activities of universities, their amounts of published scientific papers; other systems focus on students’ eventual success following the conclusion of their studies or others.

For the purposes of this project I have selected the Times Higher Education (further referred to as THE) university ranking system. THE rankings have been published annually since 2004 (THE, 2004, ‘’World University Rankings 2004’’ section, ¶1) and are internationally recognized as one of the leading ranking systems among universities. THE was selected due to its focus on all core aspects of universities, namely (THE, 2011, ‘’World University Rankings 2011-12’’ section, ¶6):

* **Teaching and learning environment** - accounts for 30% of the overall score
* **Research volume and reputation** – accounts for 30% of the overall score
* **Citations of the universities’ scientific papers in external sources** – accounts for 30% of the overall score
* **University’s ability to provide industry with innovations** – accounts for 2.5% of the overall score
* **International outlook relative both to people and research** – accounts for 7.5% of the overall score

THE rankings may appeal to potential students due to their extensive focus as well as their reputation. In the UK, each new annual rankings are accompanied by an award ceremony and the official webpage of THE is one the 2 most searched universal ranking systems on the Google search engine. Therefore it can be assumed that most potential students will visit THE website during their search for a university.

The benchmarking of the universities’ results in THE ranking can be viewed in **Table .8**.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ***Table .8*** | **THE overall score** | **World ranking** | **Europe ranking** | **Rank** |
| **University of Amsterdam** | 54.7 | 92 | 30 | **2nd** |
| **University of Twente** | 41.4 | 200 | 86 | **6th** |
| **University of Oslo** | 43.6 | 181 | 76 | **4th** |
| **University Babes-Bolyai** | N/A | N/A | N/A | **9th-10th** |
| **Universität Osnabrück** | N/A | N/A | N/A | **9th-10th** |
| **University of S.Denmark** | N/A | 251-275 | 106 - 119 | **8th** |
| **University of Essex** | N/A | 201-225 | 87 - 97 | **7th** |
| **King’s College London** | 63.2 | 56 | 12 | **1st** |
| **University of Birmingham** | 46.9 | 148 | 58 | **3rd** |
| **Maastricht University**  | 41.5 | 197 | 85 | **5th** |
|  |  |  | \*(N/A = Not available) |

# Final Benchmarking

This report contained the benchmarking of the categories of Promotional activities, Tuition fees, Scholarships, Websites, Campus Accommodation and International Rankings. For the purposes of a final evaluation of the respective universities’ performance in these recruitment activities, a final benchmark was constructed, with the categories divided into main categories and added-value categories. The main categories were each weighed at 25% of the final score, with the added-value categories providing bonus scores.

The main categories to be ranked were established as:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| * Promotional activities
 | * Tuition fees
 |
| * Websites
 | * Rankings
 |

The added-value categories were established as:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| * Scholarships
 | * Campus accommodation
 |

The sections General Information Section and Admission requirements were omitted from the final ranking system, serving introductory and orientation purposes rather than forming a part of the final score.

The scores for each main category were obtained from the universities’ ranks in the previously benchmarked sections of the report. For ranks which were shared by multiple universities (e.g. 5th-7th), an average rank was created (i.e. 6th). The scores were then added and made into an average score, which was further influenced by the added-value categories to form the final score. For scholarships, if the university provided scholarship options to its undergraduate students on an institutional level, 1 point was deducted to improve the final score. For campus accommodation, if the university provided campus accommodation to its undergraduate students, 1 point was deducted to improve the final score. If the university also possessed contracts with student housing agencies for its students, 0.5 points were deducted to improve the final score. The final scores were awarded on a 1-10 point basis, with 1 being the highest obtainable score, and 10 being the lowest.

The final results of the benchmarking can be viewed in **Table .9**.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| ***Table .9*** | ***Promotional activities*** | ***Tuition fees*** | ***Websites*** | ***Rankings*** | ***Scholar.*** | ***Campus***  | **Final Score** | **Final Rank** |
| **University of Amsterdam** | 3 | 7 | 5 | 2 | **N/A** | **-0.5** | **3.75** |  **5th** |
| **University of Twente** | 6 | 5 | 6 | 6 | **N/A** | **-1** | **4.75** |  **7th-8th** |
| **University of Oslo** | 9 | 1 | 8 | 4 | **N/A** | **-1** | **4.5** | **6th** |
| **University Babes-Bolyai** | 9 | 3 | 10 | 9 | **-1** | **-1** | **5.75** |  **9th**  |
| **Universität Osnabrück** | 9 | 2 | 9 | 9 | **N/A** | **-0.5** | **6.75** |  **10th** |
| **University of S.Denmark** | 6 | 4 | 7 | 8 | **N/A** | **-1.5** | **4.75** |  **7th-8th** |
| **University of Essex** | 3 | 8 | 2 | 7 | **-1** | **-1** | **3** | **3rd** |
| **King’s College London** | 3 | 10 | 3 | 1 | **-1** | **-1** | **2.25**  |  **1st** |
| **University of Birmingham** | 6 | 9 | 1 | 3 | **-1** | **-1** | **2.75** |  **2nd** |
| **Maastricht University**  | 1 | 6 | 4 | 5 | **N/A** | **-0.5** | **3.5** |  **4th**  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  | \*(Scholar. = Scholarships) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  | \*(N/A = Not applicable) |

# Conclusion

While largely different at size, all benchmarked universities possess large similarities in means of a common teaching methodology, admission criteria and modular construction of the programme of BA European Studies. The official promotional activities of the respective universities also share similarities, but it is Maastricht University that scored the best in this category with its large numbers of promotional activities directed at its potential applicants. Tuition fees were largely diverse among the universities, with each of the respective universities setting the amount of tuition fees to be competitive at a national level, as can be seen by the tuition fees differences between the Dutch and the British universities.

Scholarships which were benchmarked only on an institutional level, as opposed to national, were deemed as a special advantage criterion in the final ranking of the universities in **Table .9** in the case of universities that do provide them, together with campus accommodation. This was done due to their added value to potential applicants, as explained in the specific sections.

Benchmarking of websites provided the largest amount of recommendations to Maastricht University, with each university’s website being very diverse and having its own specific strongpoints. In the benchmarking ranking of the individual websites, Maastricht University was ranked on 4th place. In the benchmarking of the Times Higher Educational ranking system, Maastricht University obtained 5th place with its ranking as the 85th best ranked university in Europe, placing slightly ahead of the University of Twente.

In the overall final ranking of the universities’ factors influencing student recruitment, Maastricht University placed on 4th place as can be seen in **Table .9**. First place was obtained by King’s College London, which while having the highest tuition fees performed well in all other benchmarked categories, always finishing in the top 3 of the benchmarked universities and which also performed the best in the Times Higher Education ranking.

# Recommendations

Based on the findings of this benchmarking research, I present the following recommendation to the Marketing department of FASoS at Maastricht University, which in my belief would attract more potential students to the programme. The recommendations are based on the comparative analysis of all benchmarked criteria among the universities contained within this report, and consist only of the most distinctive characteristics of the universities’ recruitment factors. For these reasons, I suggest the following recommendations:

* Register with the search engine [www.xstudy.eu](http://www.xstudy.eu). This website is recommended to students looking for Universities by the European Commission.
* Mention more events which could be of interest to potential students looking for a university ideal to their interests. By the additional events I am referring to possible student-oriented trips, events or possibly even a list of renowned speakers who plan to hold or held presentations at the University in recent history.
* As for specific recruitment activities, I recommend the addition of the following type of tours for potential students visiting the faculty:
	+ Accommodation tours – students often contact universities regarding more information on the accommodation options. As MU has special contacts with the student housing agencies in Maastricht I believe this could be arranged and help MU recruit even more international students. This tour could also be done in the form of a virtual tour, which could be displayed on the website.
* As for the curriculum of BA European Studies, additional information concerning the programme’s focus on foreign languages could be of large importance to potential students, as the other benchmarked universities provide more information on the topic, such as information on what weight compared to other modules do the languages have.
* As for the website, I recommend the following additions:
	+ A detailed FAQ section of what a potential student can expect from Student for a Day and Open Days.
	+ Ability to turn/convert individual webpages into PDF files, such as the system of the University of Birmingham, or the option of PDF form of the list modules as alternative
	+ Make general BA/MA brochures available for download directly on the website. This way potential students may obtain at least the bare minimum of information that they seek from a prospectus, while potentially increasing their interest in requesting a more specified brochure on the specific programmes. This way, the potential students will still provide the University with their personal details, while being provided with more information in a simpler manner.
	+ Post statistics relevant to drop-out rate and gender ratio of students on website. Currently, out of all of the benchmarked universities, only University of Twente posts these statistics and this change could help MU diversify its statistics section from the other universities’ common template of posting only general statistics regarding student numbers.
	+ Lastly, I recommend the addition of Times Higher Education (THE) ranking on the website. THE ranking is among the most well-known international ranking systems and is among the first ranking websites from the point of website visitor numbers. The Maastricht University also fared reasonably well in this ranking, even placing slightly ahead of University of Twente.

# Notes

1 UoA, 2011, ‘’Application and Admission’’ section, ¶3-4

2 UoT, 2011, ‘’Programme Requirements’’ section, ¶1-6

3 UoO, 2011, ‘’How to Apply for a Bachelor’s Degree Programme for International Students’’ section, ¶1-6

4 UBB, 2011, ‘’International Relations and European Studies – Entrance Conditions’’ section, ¶1

5 UO, 2011, ‘’Admission Requirements’’ section, ¶1-13

6 UoSD, 2011, ‘’Admission’’ section, ¶1-12

7 UoE, 2011, ‘’BA European Studies – Entry Requirements’’ section, ¶1-4

8 KCL, 2011, ‘’BA European Studies – Entry Requirements’’ section, ¶1-2

9 UoB, 2011, ‘’Undergraduate Entry Requirements’’ section, ¶1-10

10 MU, 2011, ‘’Admissions’’ section, ¶1-6

11 UoA, 2011, ‘’Tuition Fees and Regulations’’ section, ¶2

12 UoT, 2011, ‘’Tuition Fees’’ section, ¶1

13 UoO, 2011, ‘’How to Finance Your Studies’’ section, ¶1

14 UBB, 2011, ‘’Why UBB?’’ section, ¶7

15 Niedersachsisches Ministerium fur Wissenschaft und Kultur, 2011, ‘’Studienbeitrage in Niedersachsen’’ section, ¶3

16 UoSD, 2011, ‘’Tuition Fees at the University of Southern Denmark’’ section, ¶5

17 UoE, 2011, ‘’Undergraduate Tuition Fees for 2011/12’’ section, ¶1

18 KCL, 2011, ‘’Home/EU Tuition Fees’’ section, ¶1-2

19 UoB, 2011, ‘’Tuition Fees for Undergraduates’’ section, ¶1-5

20 MU, 2011, ‘’Tuition Fees Bachelor’s Students 2011-2012’’ section, ¶1-6

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# Appendices

## Appendix A): Detailed benchmarking of websites

**University of Amsterdam**

1. **Content**

*Statistics:*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Advantages** | **Disadvantages** | **Ranking** |
| * Strategic plan of UvA can be found via the search function, contains general statistics
 | * No publicly accessible statistics concerning **BA ES**
 | **7** |

*List of modules covered & ECTS:*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Advantages** | **Disadvantages** | **Ranking** |
| * **BA ES** section of the website refers vaguely to the concepts covered in class
 | * Modules / Classes not listed
* ECTS not listed
 | **4** |

*Vital Information:*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Advantages** | **Disadvantages** | **Ranking** |
| * Tuition fees, scholarship options and visa & application requirements easily located on the website
 | **/** | **8** |

1. **Access availability**

*Website found on other search engines:*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Advantages** | **Disadvantages** | **Ranking** |
| * Listed on [www.bachelorsportal.eu](http://www.bachelorsportal.eu)
 | * Not listed on

[www.xstudy.eu](http://www.xstudy.eu) | **5** |

*User-friendliness of searched information:*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Advantages** | **Disadvantages** | **Ranking** |
| * Easy to locate **BA ES** section directly from the home page
* **FAQ** section of the website provides links to the most visited sections
* Translations of all important text concerning **BA ES** into English are possible
 | **/** | **8** |

1. **Design**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Advantages** | **Disadvantages** | **Ranking** |
| * Website layout identical in both language versions
* Appealing design
 | **/** | **7** |

1. **Additional information available on the website**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Advantages** | **Ranking** |
| * Detailed history of school
* Help with insurance and housing link
* Practical Guide
* Brief description of the job market in this field
 | **8,5** |

**University of Twente**

1. **Content**

*Statistics:*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Advantages** | **Disadvantages** | **Ranking** |
| * All general statistics concerning **BA ES** can be found in the FAQ section of its webpage
 | * Only general statistics listed
	+ No statistics relevant to successfulness of students or other
 | **6** |

*List of modules covered & ECTS:*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Advantages** | **Disadvantages** | **Ranking** |
| * All modules of the programme are listed on its webpage without descriptions
 | * ECTS not listed
 | **6** |

*Vital Information:*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Advantages** | **Disadvantages** | **Ranking** |
| * Tuition fees, scholarship options and visa & application requirements easily located on the website
 | **/** | **8** |

1. **Access availability**

*Website found on other search engines:*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Advantages** | **Disadvantages** | **Ranking** |
| * Listed on

[www.bachelorsportal.eu](http://www.bachelorsportal.eu) | * Not listed on

[www.xstudy.eu](http://www.xstudy.eu) | **5** |

*User-friendliness of searched information:*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Advantages** | **Disadvantages** | **Ranking** |
| * Easy to locate **BA ES** section directly from the home page
* **FAQ** section of the website provides detailed information on the programme
* Translations of all important text concerning **BA ES** into English are possible
 | **/** | **8** |

1. **Design**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Advantages** | **Disadvantages** | **Ranking** |
| * Website layout identical in both language versions
* Simple, yet appealing design
 | * Website layout less illustrious
* White colour is dominant
 | **6,5** |

1. **Additional information available on the website**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Advantages** | **Ranking** |
| * Information helpful to international students concerning living abroad available on a separate webpage
* Testimonials of students
* Considerable description of the job market in this field
 | **8** |

**University of Oslo**

1. **Content**

*Statistics:*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Advantages** | **Disadvantages** | **Ranking** |
| * Basic statistics available in Norwegian language, such as amount of students
* List of alumni who were awarded a Nobel Prize
 | * No publicly accessible statistics in English language
 | **7** |

*List of modules covered & ECTS:*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Advantages** | **Disadvantages** | **Ranking** |
| * Detailed list of modules available on **BA ES** webpage in Norwegian
* ECTS listed in detail with modules
 | * No description of the modules or ECTS available in English
 | **5** |

*Vital Information:*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Advantages** | **Disadvantages** | **Ranking** |
| * Tuition fees, scholarship options and visa & application requirements easily located on the website
* Language requirements also located easily on the website
 | * No information concerning the programme available in English
* No scholarship options listed
 | **6** |

1. **Access availability**

*Website found on other search engines:*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Advantages** | **Disadvantages** | **Ranking** |
| **/** | * Not listed on

 [www.bachelorsportal.eu](http://www.bachelorsportal.eu)* Not listed on

[www.xstudy.eu](http://www.xstudy.eu) | **0** |

*User-friendliness of searched information:*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Advantages** | **Disadvantages** | **Ranking** |
| * Easy to locate **BA ES** section directly from the home page
 | * The unavailability of information concerning the programme in English might discourage potential international students
 | **5** |

1. **Design**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Advantages** | **Disadvantages** | **Ranking** |
| * Website layout identical in both language versions
* Appealing design with a well balanced contrast of black and white colours
 | * **BA ES** website lists its last update in 2010
 | **6,5** |

1. **Additional information available on the website**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Advantages** | **Ranking** |
| * Research news of the university available on the website also in English
* Special Events Programme with student-oriented events and trips
* Budget + Cost of living section
 | **8** |

**University Babes-Bolyai**

1. **Content**

*Statistics:*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Advantages** | **Disadvantages** | **Ranking** |
| **/** | * No publicly accessible statistics
 | **0** |

*List of modules covered & ECTS:*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Advantages** | **Disadvantages** | **Ranking** |
| * Only aims of programme listed
* ECTS listed in programme description
 | * Modules not listed
 | **3** |

*Vital Information:*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Advantages** | **Disadvantages** | **Ranking** |
| * Tuition fees, scholarship options and visa & application requirements easily located on the website
 | * No information listed on similarities and differences between the 3 language versions of the programme
 | **6** |

1. **Access availability**

*Website found on other search engines:*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Advantages** | **Disadvantages** | **Ranking** |
| * Listed on

[www.bachelorsportal.eu](http://www.bachelorsportal.eu) | * Not listed on

[www.xstudy.eu](http://www.xstudy.eu) | **5** |

*User-friendliness of searched information:*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Advantages** | **Disadvantages** | **Ranking** |
| **/** | * Difficult to find relevant **BA ES** section of the website
* Various vital information located on different, sections of the website
 | **4** |

1. **Design**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Advantages** | **Disadvantages** | **Ranking** |
| * Website layout identical in both language versions
 | * Chaotic, confusing and simplistic design
 | **4** |

1. **Additional information available on the website**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Advantages** | **Ranking** |
| * Detailed history of school
* Considerable description of the job market in this field
* Website available in 4 languages
* University Radio available on the website
 | **9** |

**Universität Osnabrück**

1. **Content**

*Statistics:*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Advantages** | **Disadvantages** | **Ranking** |
| **/** | * No publicly accessible statistics
 | **0** |

*List of modules covered & ECTS:*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Advantages** | **Disadvantages** | **Ranking** |
| * Only aims of the programme listed
* ECTS listed
 | * Modules not listed
 | **3** |

*Vital Information:*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Advantages** | **Disadvantages** | **Ranking** |
| * Tuition fees, scholarship options and visa & application requirements easily located on the website
* Language requirements also located easily on the website
 | **/** | **8** |

1. **Access availability**

*Website found on other search engines:*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Advantages** | **Disadvantages** | **Ranking** |
| * Listed on

[www.bachelorsportal.eu](http://www.bachelorsportal.eu)* Listed on

[www.xstudy.eu](http://www.xstudy.eu) | **/** | **10** |

*User-friendliness of searched information:*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Advantages** | **Disadvantages** | **Ranking** |
| * German version of the website is clearly categorized with information easily locatable
* University targets only German-speaking students and international students only for exchang
 | * Multiple English links lead to information/websites in German
 | **6** |

1. **Design**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Advantages** | **Disadvantages** | **Ranking** |
| * Website layout identical in both language versions
 | * Simplistic, unattractive design
* Misleading links
 | **2** |

1. **Additional information available on the website**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Advantages** | **Ranking** |
| * All vital information concerning admissions and Erasmus available also in English, even though the programme is offered only in German
* Study regulations and financial plan possibilities listed
 | **6,5** |

**University of Southern Denmark**

1. **Content**

*Statistics:*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Advantages** | **Disadvantages** | **Ranking** |
| **/** | * No publicly accessible statistics
 | **0** |

*List of modules covered & ECTS:*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Advantages** | **Disadvantages** | **Ranking** |
| * All modules of the programme are listed in great detail on the website
* Modules and their respective ECTS values in PDF form
* All modules also list their ECTS
 | **/** | **9** |

*Vital Information:*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Advantages** | **Disadvantages** | **Ranking** |
| * Tuition fees, scholarship options and visa & application requirements easily located on the website
* Language requirements also located easily on the website
 | **/** | **8** |

1. **Access availability**

*Website found on other search engines:*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Advantages** | **Disadvantages** | **Ranking** |
| * Listed on

[www.bachelorsportal.eu](http://www.bachelorsportal.eu) | * Not listed on

[www.xstudy.eu](http://www.xstudy.eu) | **5** |

*User-friendliness of searched information:*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Advantages** | **Disadvantages** | **Ranking** |
| * Easy to locate BA ES section directly from the home page
* BA ES webpage clearly categorized
* All important information is available in the English version of the website
 | **/** | **8** |

1. **Design**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Advantages** | **Disadvantages** | **Ranking** |
| * Website layout identical in both language versions
 | * Website layout less illustrious than of other universities’
 | **6** |

1. **Additional information available on the website**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Advantages** | **Ranking** |
| * Job offers database on the homepage
* FAQ to student life
* Practical Section of the website, which lists links named after FAQ categories which when clicked transfer visitor to the relevant section
 | **8** |

**University of Essex**

1. **Content**

*Statistics:*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Advantages** | **Disadvantages** | **Ranking** |
| * All statistics regarding the numbers of students and staff available and easily locatable
 | * Only general statistics listed
	+ No statistics relevant to successfulness of students or other
 | **6** |

*List of modules covered & ECTS:*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Advantages** | **Disadvantages** | **Ranking** |
| * Only the required number of modules to be taken listed
* Credits listed on an annual amount
 | * Modules not listed
* Credits not listed in detail
 | **3** |

*Vital Information:*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Advantages** | **Disadvantages** | **Ranking** |
| * Tuition fees, scholarship options and visa & application requirements easily located on the website
* All vital information linked on the main page of **BA ES** in the main frame
 | **/** | **9** |

1. **Access availability**

*Website found on other search engines:*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Advantages** | **Disadvantages** | **Ranking** |
| * Listed on

[www.bachelorsportal.eu](http://www.bachelorsportal.eu)* Listed on

[www.xstudy.eu](http://www.xstudy.eu) | **/** | **10** |

*User-friendliness of searched information:*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Advantages** | **Disadvantages** | **Ranking** |
| * Course finder is the first frame of the website which will be displayed to visitors upon visiting the webpage
* Relatively easy to locate BA S section of the website
 | **/** | **7** |

1. **Design**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Advantages** | **Disadvantages** | **Ranking** |
| * Innovative design through the use of static frames for programme information and dynamic frames for each selectable category of the website
* Use of colours for categorization of links
 | **/** | **8** |

1. **Additional information available on the website**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Advantages** | **Ranking** |
| * Article linked on the homepage concerning University of Essex being among the top universities for student satisfaction
* Virtual tour of the campus function of the webpage
 | **7** |

**King’s College London**

1. **Content**

*Statistics:*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Advantages** | **Disadvantages** | **Ranking** |
| **/** | * No statistics are publicly available
 | **0** |

*List of modules covered & ECTS:*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Advantages** | **Disadvantages** | **Ranking** |
| * All modules are listed
 | * Modules are listed without a description
* Modules are listed without their respective credits
* Credits are not listed
 | **5** |

*Vital Information:*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Advantages** | **Disadvantages** | **Ranking** |
| * Tuition fees, scholarship options and visa & application requirements easily located on the website
* Vital information is accessible from both the homepage’s static frames and the respective programme’s dynamic main frame
 | **/** | **9** |

1. **Access availability**

*Website found on other search engines:*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Advantages** | **Disadvantages** | **Ranking** |
| * Listed on

[www.bachelorsportal.eu](http://www.bachelorsportal.eu)* Listed on

[www.xstudy.eu](http://www.xstudy.eu) | **/** | **10** |

*User-friendliness of searched information:*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Advantages** | **Disadvantages** | **Ranking** |
| * Ability to find desired programme through selecting the first letter of the programme or by subject area
* All the vital information can be found both on the homepage and on the webpage of BA ES
 | **/** | **8** |

1. **Design**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Advantages** | **Disadvantages** | **Ranking** |
| * Innovative use of interactive multimedia platform collection (facebook, twitter, youtube, etc..)
* Visually appealing design
 | * The list of all programmes on the homepage, while practical for visitor, takes away from the overall visual appeal of the website
* Old design (2008) used for the undergraduate webpages
 | **7,5** |

1. **Additional information available on the website**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Advantages** | **Ranking** |
| * Student Society/organisation link on the BA ES webpage
* Student profiles/testimonials
* Homepage sub-menu on how students can get involved with the events organised by the university
 | **8** |

**University of Birmingham**

1. **Content**

*Statistics:*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Advantages** | **Disadvantages** | **Ranking** |
| * Statistics section of the website
	+ Amount of students
* International facts & figures
* Ranking statistics
 | **/** | **8** |

*List of modules covered & ECTS:*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Advantages** | **Disadvantages** | **Ranking** |
| * All modules are named on the website
* All modules state how many credits they are worth
 | * Not all modules provide their descriptions
 | **8,5** |

*Vital Information:*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Advantages** | **Disadvantages** | **Ranking** |
| * Tuition fees, scholarship options and visa & application requirements easily located on the website
* Vital information is accessible from both the homepage’s static frames and the respective programme’s dynamic main frame
 | **/** | **9** |

1. **Access availability**

*Website found on other search engines:*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Advantages** | **Disadvantages** | **Ranking** |
| * Listed on

[www.bachelorsportal.eu](http://www.bachelorsportal.eu)* Listed on

[www.xstudy.eu](http://www.xstudy.eu) | **/** | **10** |

*User-friendliness of searched information:*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Advantages** | **Disadvantages** | **Ranking** |
| * It is easy to find the specific programme of the BA European Studies variety
* All the vital information can be found both on the homepage and on the webpage of BA ES
 | **/** | **8** |

1. **Design**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Advantages** | **Disadvantages** | **Ranking** |
| * Innovative design
* Contains only vital information in a categorized view unless expanded
* Links categorized according to keywords
 | **/** | **9** |

1. **Additional information available on the website**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Advantages** | **Ranking** |
| * Open Day section of the website with larger amounts of information as compared to the other benchmarked websites
* The function to turn every part of the webpage into a PDF file
* Nobel prize list of alumni
 | **7,5** |

**Maastricht University**

1. **Content**

*Statistics:*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Advantages** | **Disadvantages** | **Ranking** |
| * All statistics regarding the numbers of students and staff available and easily locatable
 | * Only general statistics listed
	+ No statistics relevant to successfulness of students or other
 | **6** |

*List of modules covered & ECTS:*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Advantages** | **Disadvantages** | **Ranking** |
| * All modules of the programme are listed in great detail on the website
* All modules also list their ECTS
 | **/** | **9** |

*Vital Information:*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Advantages** | **Disadvantages** | **Ranking** |
| * Tuition fees, scholarship options and visa & application requirements easily located on the website
 | **/** | **8** |

1. **Access availability**

*Website found on other search engines:*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Advantages** | **Disadvantages** | **Ranking** |
| * Listed on

[www.bachelorsportal.eu](http://www.bachelorsportal.eu) | * Not listed on

[www.xstudy.eu](http://www.xstudy.eu) | **5** |

*User-friendliness of searched information:*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Advantages** | **Disadvantages** | **Ranking** |
| * Information important to programme and potential students easily locatable
* Information on the website identical in both English and Dutch version
* Content clearly categorized
 | **/** | **8** |

1. **Design**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Advantages** | **Disadvantages** | **Ranking** |
| * Website layout identical in both language versions
* Simple, yet innovative and clearly categorized
 | * Visually unappealing colours used on a predominantly white backgroundd
 | **6** |

1. **Additional information available on the website**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Advantages** | **Ranking** |
| * Detailed history of the programmes
* Press releases
* Testimonials of students
* Multiple videos available on the website, including interviews with professors, students and students’ projects
 | **9** |