

## Enchanting Exchange Challenges - a Potter perspective

What do you think of when you hear 'Great Britain'? For some it's baked beans and sausage, football and cricket, or Queen and the Queen. For me, a Dutch kid that grew up with the Potter books and movies, the first thing that comes to mind is Hogwarts. Unsurprisingly, the three biggest challenges I was met with would have been right at home in Harry's world.

First, choosing the right university. With far more than four excellent options, this is a daunting task even for the Sorting Hat. Would you rather have the establishment ranked 3rd for research, the one ranked 4th for student satisfaction or the one ranked 2nd for teaching quality? After browsing faculty websites, comparing courses and chats with old graduates, I made my choice. The latter especially was enlightening - alumni recommending their alma mater is the best endorsement any school can have.

Then, yet more choices - selecting the best set of subjects. My university of choice offers far more to do than can be done in the limited time I have in Great Britain. Like Hermione, I found myself looking for a Timeturner. I chose to focus on aspects of my field that are taught differently here than in the Netherlands. Study advisors on either side of the Channel were key to make the most of my time.

Right, all choices made, now just to find a room. However, whereas Harry can simply summon the Room of Requirement, things weren't quite as easy for me. A student number was required to sign up for many of the accommodations. As I got this number quite late, I wasn't able to benefit from the public accommodations. The private sector gave plenty of options but was surprisingly pricy compared to my current room.

Whether it's a magical adventure or an exchange period, any good story starts with challenges. Looking forward to it! And for those who tell me I won't learn any spells - have you ever seen Welsh street names?