



# WUR Goes Abroad

## 1. Student Information

<b>Field of study in Wageningen</b>	BSc Landschapsarchitectuur en Ruimtelijke Planning
<b>Study period exchange (dd/mm/yyyy)</b>	12/08/2019 until 20/12/2019
<b>Country (exchange)</b>	Norway
<b>City (exchange)</b>	Stavanger
<b>University (exchange)</b>	University of Stavanger
<b>Faculty (exchange)</b>	Faculty of Social Sciences

## 2. Motivation for exchange

### Why did you choose to go on study exchange?

I wanted to go on exchange because I want to seize every opportunity to develop myself as an individual. I wanted to learn more about different cultures and their relationship to other ways of thinking and solving (spatial) problems. I hoped to learn about other cultural perspectives on life, nature and space and how to apply these in decision-making in my field of study as well as in daily life. I get inspired by discovering new places; a change of environment motivates me to achieve my goals. On top of this, I wanted to expand my social network; it is nice to know people from different origins with their values. I believe this also creates potential possibilities for the future.

### What is the reason you chose for this country/university?

I have always wanted to go to Norway. I have seen many videos and heard many stories about the beautiful nature and the high level of education in Norway. I highly value these things, they were key to my motivation on successfully completing courses over there. Stavanger University is internationally orientated (over 10% of the Stavanger University's students have an international background) as are many Norwegians, having been taught English starting in primary schools. I wanted to easily fit in without many language barriers. However, the most important reason for me to want to go to Stavanger University is because it is the only university providing courses in Tourism at a bachelor's level in the first semester. This is something I would like to do during my master's as well and I would like to already prepare for that.

## 3. Accessibility to reach destination

### Do you have any tips to reach your exchange destination? (E.g. bus, train, etc.)

You can't really take the train from Wageningen towards Stavanger, so you either have to fly to Sola (Stavanger airport), or if you want to travel more eco friendly you can also fly to Oslo and take the train from there. It is also possible to drive to Denmark, take the ferry to Kristiansand and drive from there to Stavanger. Having a car is nice, since there are a lot of things to do and you need a car in order to get there (for example when you want to go hiking or go to a husky farm).

## 4. University and studying

Could you provide some general information about the followed courses?

	Course	ECTS	Short description of the contents	Appreciation of course: 1(low) – 5(high)	Remarks
1	Responsible Tourism and Ethics	10	The course offers an in-depth view of the impacts of tourism on the natural environment as well as on local cultures and describes some of the tools used in managing this problem	5	Information provided so accurate, it's really made me disappointed in the world
2	Host - Guest Encounters	10	This course takes a closer look at the significance of roles and relations in tourism, about understanding visitors, hosts and employees in tourism enterprises and at destinations.	3	
3	Adventure Tourism and Entrepreneurship	10	The course examines the complexities of the adventure tourism sector. It focusses both on the adventure tourism activities itself and on the business aspects of being an entrepreneur in this field.	3	

### How is the study formalized? (E.g. study forms, academic level, examination, workload, lesson material)

All the courses had a lecture once a week. For adventure tourism this was 4 hours and for responsible tourism and host-guest it was 3 hours. Besides this, you had to read several articles. The final grade consisted of an graded essay and a final exam (and for adventure tourism and responsible tourism also a mid-term exam). The mid-terms were similar to mid-terms at the WUR, although the level (in general) was a little lower. The final examinations were pretty different. Each exam only had a few questions (3 or 4) which had to be answered within 3 or 4 hours, so called "essay questions". For these questions you really had to write a lot, something that I'm not familiar with from the WUR. However, it provided a nice chance to reflect on what you had learned and really share your knowledge and form an opinion about the topic. Since there were only 10 hours of lectures every week there was plenty of time left to do the readings, so the workload wasn't that hard and actually felt better than on the WUR, where I always exceed the prescribed 40 hours a week with at least 5 – 10 hours.

**What is the culture of the university? (E.g. How approachable are the lecturers, engagement with local students? What are the differences with the WUR?)**

The culture on the university was very pleasant. Students and teachers are on first name basis and very approachable during and outside of class. They also greet each other when they run into each other in another social setting and they are really interested in you as a person as well. I recognise this from the WUR as well, although at the WUR there's a little more distance between teachers and students. It may also have to do with the size of the classes. These are comparable to the ones for Spatial Planning, so not that big. Interaction with Norwegian students is a little harder. They're willing to speak English and interact with you, but most of the times speak Norwegian. This is because they already have Norwegian friends in the same class, and in the start you're someone new coming into this already known structure. If I'm honest though, I think it's the same in the Netherlands. International students and Dutch students don't really interact, unless you have to do group work together.

**What does the university offer the student additionally? (E.g. Catering, sports facilities, laundry facilities?)**

There are multiple cafeterias comparable to the ones WUR offers. There's also a sports centre, which unfortunately doesn't have a swimming pool, but luckily offers a climbing hall instead. There's a special sports arrangement for Erasmus+ students, who only have to pay for 4 months (although most of us are staying for 5 months). Except for the swimming pool, there are a lot of possibilities offered in the sports centre. The university also offers some credit on your student card, so you can print up to 70 pages (black/white) before you have to pay for it. Then there's a really great library, which is open 24/7 and accessible with the student card outside of office hours. In this library also a kitchen can be found with a hot water boiler, fridge, microwave and dish washer. There are multiple rooms which are all themed differently. Except for the usual library theme that's also used in the WUR, there's a sci-fi theme (in this room are also some capsules so you can isolate yourself from others), a nature theme (this room has hanging chairs and is very green), an old library theme (with a projected fireplace), and a silent room. In the sci-fi room, nature room, and old library room there are also really comfortable sofa's you can seat yourself in. Lastly, there's a student bar on campus that's opened every Thursday. Alcoholic drinks are very cheap here, about half the price of usual bars.

## **5.Housing-travelling-living**

**What are the possibilities for housing? (E.g. Availability to sign up for a room on campus, private rooms, rent rates?)**

You can sign up for housing offered by the university. Most of these rooms are not on campus, but have to be reached by bus. However, the university doesn't guarantee you housing since there so many incoming students. You can also rent privately, using finn.no. The rent rates are more expensive than in the Netherlands, but then Norway is also a really expensive country.

**What is the culture of the country like? (E.g. Differences with home, local cuisine, habits, manners?)**

Norway is actually pretty similar to the Netherlands. People are very distant when they're sober, but very talkative and approachable when they've had a drink. The cuisine isn't

that different either. There's a lot of options for a dish with potato's/vegetables/meat, but not as much options for vegetarian/vegan dishes (although it's possible!).

**Could you give a general price indication of the place of residence compared to living in Wageningen?**

Renting a place in Norway is in between 3500 and 6600 NOK (which is approximately €350 and €660), although most places cost around 4000 NOK (€400). Renting a place in Wageningen is much cheaper (between €150 and €350).

**Could you give some information about public transport infrastructure? (E.g. Cost public transport card, taxi prices, how to travel to the university?)**

Public transport is very well organised in Norway. There are a lot of busses going to the city centre, and there are also ferries and trains going. You have the choice to buy a public transport card like the OV-chipkaart, or to install the Kolumbus Billett app on your smartphone that provides a QR-code every time you want to check in. However, if you want to use this app, a credit card or Norwegian bank account is needed. If you're still under the age of 23, you can buy a 30-day youth ticket for 299 NOK (€29,90). With this ticket you can travel unlimited with bus, ferry, and train in Rogaland (the province Stavanger is located in). If you're over the age of 23, you can buy a student ticket for 360 NOK (€36). However, this ticket is only valid in one of the seven zones in Rogaland. Taxi prices are insanely expensive, therefore I never used one. Instead, I joined a Facebook group that illegally provides taxi rides by private parties. This is much cheaper, but also illegal so you have to be discrete. I was located in the student dorm furthest from the university (8,5 km to university, 12,5 km to city centre). Because of this, the university offered a private bus driving every morning to the university and every evening from university to the dorm. This was the only dorm this arrangement was made for. If I wanted to go to university by public transport it took me about an hour. I could choose to walk ten minutes → take a bus → take another bus, or walk 30 minutes → take a bus. Unfortunately, it was always faster to walk 30 minutes and just take one bus. This is also why some roommates decided to buy a bike to cycle the distance. One last thing you should know about public transport in Norway is that busses are always late.

## 6. Free time

**What are must-sees in the area? (E.g. nearby destinations, how do you prefer to travel, when to plan?)**

Most must-sees are hikes and include:

- Preikestolen (Pulpitrock)
- Kjeragbolten
- Himakånå
- Trolltunga
- Dalsnuten

Preikestolen is reachable by public transport in summer season only. Dalsnuten is reachable by public transport all year round. The other hikes are too far away to reach with public transport, so you need a car to get there. It rains a lot in Stavanger, so be careful with when you plan outdoor activities. However, you shouldn't let the rain always

stop you. In the mountains snow can already start falling in October, so make sure you always check the website of the hike you're planning to do before you actually go there. Something else that's really nice to do is to visit a husky farm in Sirdal or when you visit in the Autumn semester you can also go to the Christmas market in Egersund. Lastly you can plan a trip to Bergen, since it's only 4 hours driving from Stavanger.

Even though it's Norway, Stavanger is located in the south, so you won't be able to see the northern lights (unless you're really really really lucky).

#### **What does not appear in the travel guide, but is worth a visit?**

The beach. There are several beaches near Stavanger and when the sun is still shining in summer it's really nice to hang out there. Even when it's colder, it's nice to watch the sunset.

#### **Do you have general tips and tricks about leisure time (E.g. recommendations for restaurants, going out?)**

A really nice restaurant is Dognville, which is a burger place that offers a lot of different burgers (also vegetarian and vegan). You can go to the cinema with student discount Monday - Thursday. Then there's Gossip Bar, that serves beer for only 34 NOK (€3,40, yes it's still expensive but you usually pay about 80 NOK = €8,00 for a beer). If you prefer something else I would recommend Alf & Werner. This is a bar that offers live music on the second floor, but also has a club and a lounge on the third floor. Usually you would pay 150 NOK (€15,00) as entry fee, but you can get the *Alf & Werner card* in the student bar on campus that provides you free entry.

## **7.Challenges & best moment abroad**

#### **What was a challenge you have experienced?**

The only challenge I experienced sometimes was going to university, since I lived so far away and the private bus only departed at 7:30 (which sometimes was too early for me) and I didn't want to walk for 30 minutes. Something else was renting a car. You're allowed to rent a car if you have a drivers licence, but if you're under 23 years old you have to pay a young drivers fee, so if I wanted to go out I would need someone that's over 23 years old and we could save some money.

#### **What was your best memory abroad?**

My best memory was when I went on a road trip to Bergen. We rented a car for a couple of days and just drove to Bergen, using different ferries to get there. We had a really great dinner in Bare Vestland, a restaurant that served us typical Norwegian food in tapas. We used another route driving back and saw so much beautiful fjords, mountains, and villages.

## **8. Contact details (optional)**

<b>Is the reader allowed to contact the writer?</b>	yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no <input type="checkbox"/>
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