



# WUR Goes Abroad

## 1. Student Information

<b>Field of study in Wageningen</b>	Bachelor Landscape architecture & Spatial planning
<b>Study period exchange (dd/mm/yyyy)</b>	01/09/2021 until 19/12/2021
<b>Country (exchange)</b>	Estonia
<b>City (exchange)</b>	Tartu
<b>University (exchange)</b>	Estonian University of Life Science
<b>Faculty (exchange)</b>	Institute of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences / Institute of Forestry and Rural Engineering

## 2. Motivation for exchange

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

I wanted to go on Erasmus because I wanted to challenge myself to live on my own abroad. I always wanted to do it, but I was quite nervous about it because it was a big threshold for me. I felt I was giving up a lot of what I had in the Netherlands. I also wanted to go on Erasmus to improve my English. I have always found it difficult to communicate in English, so this seemed the ideal step to work on it.

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

I chose Estonia because I wanted to go to a country I have never been to and would never normally go to. While searching for universities in these kinds of countries, I came across the University of Life Science in Estonia. Compared to other universities, this university had courses that I found very interesting. That was finally the decision for me to go to Estonia.

## 3. Accessibility to reach destination

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

The best way to get to Estonia (which everyone does) is to fly to Tallinn and from there take a bus to Tartu. In Estonia there are LUX busses and with these buses you can go from the airport to Tartu quite cheap. There is even a stop near the campus.

## 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	Nature Conservation	10	You learn about all aspects related to nature conservation	4	I liked the profession very much. There is a nice variation between lectures and assignments. I learned a lot from it.
2	Global changes	5	You learn about every topic related to global changes	2	The subject seemed very interesting to me because it contained almost all the subjects focused on global change. However, the way it was taught was very disappointing, because it only consisted of student presentations and you did not learn much from the teacher himself.
3	Energy-Forestry	6	You learn about extracting bioenergy from forests and all the aspects involved	2	This subject was a self-study subject and compared to courses in Wageningen it took some time to get used to. You get a deadline at the beginning that is only four months later and for the rest you have to do and plan everything yourself.
4	Game Biology	2	The subject is about the management of animals, why it is important, what animals there are and how you can recognise them.	4	The teacher is very old (70 years) and speaks poor English. Despite this, I liked it best because he tried very hard and I learned a lot about hunting and why it can be important. I also learned a lot about different mammals.

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

I found the courses that I took at the university to be of a much lower quality compared to Wageningen. With the exception of nature conservation, there was no course guide at all for all the courses and the teacher planned some excursions last minute. I also noticed that it is much easier to get higher grades. Reports are assessed more easily, and exams are not very difficult. The exam of global changes, for instance, was a ten minutes conversation with the teacher about a certain subject of global changes and if you told everything the teacher wanted to hear you got an A (excellent). The workload is also not too high and not well distributed. The first month I had to do very little while the last month and a half I had to do a lot.

**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 first thing I noticed was that three out of the four courses I took were given only to internationals and not to Estonian students. Therefore, there was very little engagement with local students. The lectures, on the other hand, were very involved and also very approachable, which I find comparable to the teachers at WUR.

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

The university offers all students a room in their dormitory with laundry facilities included. On the campus there is a large sports building where you can play different sports and it has a gym. Furthermore, there are two canteens in two different buildings where you can have lunch (I'm not sure about dinner) and there is a small library that is ideal for studying.

## 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?)**

Each student is offered a room in the university's dormitory. These are twin/double rooms which means that you share it with someone else. However, there is the possibility to have a twin/double room for yourself (you just have to pay double). There are also options to rent a flat by yourself, but I don't know much about this because I went for a room in a dormitory. I would also recommend a room in the dormitory because almost all the internationals are there, and it is easier to make contact with other students.

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

I find this a difficult question to answer because everyone in Estonia says that they don't necessarily have their own culture because in history it belonged to so many different countries. I do know that it is difficult to have contact with Estonian students because they do not open up quickly to internationals and you mainly hang out with other internationals. On the other hand, many people in Estonia can speak English and I did not have any problem communicating with them.

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

Rooms in Estonia are generally cheaper than rooms in the Netherlands (including Wageningen). However, you can estimate the money you have in the Netherlands to live from approximately the same as in Estonia. Groceries are about the same price and it's not that everything is very cheap.

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

In Tartu, public transport is very well organised. For 7 euros you can get a monthly ticket and use every bus in Tartu. They also have bicycles that you can use with your bus pass. Besides the busses in Tartu, you have the bus company Lux Express in Estonia. These buses travel between big places in Estonia and are very cheap and comfortable. To travel from the Netherlands to Tartu, the best way is to fly to the airport in Tallinn and from there you can take the Lux bus to Tartu (it even stops at the campus).

## 6. Free time

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

In Estonia, Tallinn is the most beautiful city, and it is highly recommended to visit it. Furthermore, the nature in Estonia is really beautiful and they have many nature parks that are worth visiting. The most beautiful one was in my opinion Lahemaa Rahvuspark where you have to visit the Viru bog. Furthermore, Riga is also easy to reach, and I hear that it is a very beautiful city (I could not go there myself because Latvia had a lockdown).

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

Estonia is not a country with many cities. Besides Tallinn, it is difficult to visit really beautiful big cities. But you can visit many beautiful places focused on nature. I found the island Saaremaa very beautiful myself and I also found the national park Karula very beautiful.



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

You have a lot of free time at the Estonian University of Life Science. What many people did with this free time was travelling to cities and nature parks. In Estonia it is easy and cheap to rent a car so you can easily travel with it. Furthermore, the bar Mõku is a very nice bar where many internationals come and the Puhaste Kelder has the best beer in Tartu (the locals recommend it).

## 7.Challenges & best moment abroad

### What was a challenge you have experienced?

One challenge I experienced was that I missed quite a few people during the time I was away. I really loved studying in Tartu and met a lot of wonderful people, but at the same time I noticed that I also missed my girlfriend, a few close friends, and my family very much at certain times.

### What was your best memory abroad?

I think my best memories were when I went on a trip with other internationals to certain places in Estonia. You get to know people much better during these trips and you make friends much quicker than when you are just studying.

## 8. Contact details (optional)

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