



# WUR Goes Abroad

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## 1. Student Information

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<b>Field of study in Wageningen</b>	Sven van Ooijen
<b>Study period exchange (dd/mm/yyyy)</b>	01-09-2021 until 30-01-2022
<b>Country (exchange)</b>	Estonia
<b>City (exchange)</b>	Tartu
<b>University (exchange)</b>	Estonian University of Life Sciences
<b>Faculty (exchange)</b>	Landscape Architecture

## 2. Motivation for exchange

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

To experience living abroad and making contact with a lot of new people from all over the world.

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

Because of the courses they provided. I didn't want to go outside of Europe and for the remaining possibilities I checked to courses. Estonia had a faculty of landscape architecture with interesting courses I couldn't follow in Wageningen.

## 3. Accessibility to reach destination

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

I travelled to Estonia with a car together with my brother. We made a kind of road trip to get to Estonia, where he travelled on to Finland where he would study for half a year. The other people from the Netherlands travelled with an airplane. I would recommend to check possible flights to Tallinn but also to Riga, because there are direct busses from both cities to Tartu.

## 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
<b>1</b>	Outdoor recreation planning and design	11	Analysing, and designing recreational themed projects.	3	
<b>2</b>	Planting design	3	Learning about planting schemes, patterns, combinations and principles.	4	
<b>3</b>	Garden design	6	Starting of with drawing your garden in AutoCAD and then designing a garden on the basis of garden principles.	3	Not that much information given about textual part of the examination.
<b>4</b>	Advanced presentation graphics	4	Developing your skills in presenting your work. Digitally, by learning the kind of design software you want, and vocally.	5	Very useful, learned a lot in Vectorworks and AutoCAD. These were to programs for me I wanted to focus on. Everyone focusses on their own programmes in their own level.
<b>5</b>	Basic course in CAD	3	Learning the basics in AutoCAD 2D.	3	Could be very useful, but the course started in week 9. I didn't had any knowledge in AutoCAD before my exchange but after the first 8 weeks I already found out most of the information they gave us in this course.
<b>6</b>	Sustainable environmental engineering	3	Learning about principles and models in engineering hand in hand with the environment.	3	The teacher talked very slowly and static, because of that it was hard to follow and most of the time a bit lazy. But in the end, it was a really interesting course, the information is very useful nowadays.

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

During the semester there isn't that much work to be done. Only close to deadlines the work gets more. The academic level in Estonia is clearly lower than I am used to in Wageningen, this is also visible in the examination. The examination is very freely, there are no hard deadlines and almost every exam has different dates on which you can take them.

**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?)**

Most of the lectures speak very well English and every lecturer I had was very approachable, that helped me a lot while I was in quarantine due to COVID. The local students in the bachelor courses are really on their own, I didn't talk to them at all. In the master courses the Estonian students are a bit older and more open for contact, but still a lot with each other. The international students have a lot of contact between each other in both bachelor as master courses. A big difference with the WUR is that in Estonia you have all courses at the same time over a period of half a year. You have to plan way more than in the Netherlands. Its kind of the secondary school in the Netherlands.

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

The sport facility of the university is great, you can rent a sports field for free before 15.00 and I went a lot to the gym which was really good and not busy at all. The laundry rooms in the apartments were a bit small, a lot of times you had to wait until there was a free laundry machine. I have been to the catering only twice, but I would recommend to go early, otherwise the food isn't that warm anymore. Besides that the food was good and quite cheap.

## **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?)**

I signed up for double room for myself in the hostel where almost all Erasmus students were located. That was really cool, you could hang out a lot with other students and really easily. You have to sign up quite early because there were some students without a room in the beginning, they had to find their own room somewhere in Tartu. You can share a room (which I quite big, at least for 1 person) or rent it yourself. Then you pay double the rent but have some privacy. The rent is 109 or 218 a month depending if you share a room. You share your kitchen, bathroom and toilet with 1 to 7 other people.

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

Most of the Estonian people are quite shy, but in the pubs this is all gone. We tried some typical Estonian food with international dinners (dinner where people cook dishes from their own country and everyone can taste local dishes), but it wasn't my favourite, not at all.

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

I thought Estonia would be a bit cheaper than the Netherlands with doing groceries and just living, but it turned out to be the same. Of course, you can make it as expensive as you want. I went on a lot of trips during the weekends and went to the pubs quite often, but it was part of the experience for me in getting to know the country and the people.

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

I would recommend a monthly bus card for 8,50 a month, rent bikes are included in this price. Otherwise you would pay 2,00 a time if you take the bus. Taxis are really cheap if you book them with more people. The apartment I lived in was a 2 minute walk from almost all university buildings, so I walked. To get to the centre I took the bus quite a lot, and otherwise the bicycle or by foot (30 min. max).

## **6. Free time**

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

Old town Tallinn, Riga, Helsinki (ferry is 25 euro), Viljandi, Saaremaa (best weekend I have had in Estonia) and Laheema national park.

There are a lot of beautiful parks with beautiful walking tracks.

In Tartu you should definitely go to Mõku (best pub in town) and if possible ice skate on the river.

There is a website called [autolevi.com](http://autolevi.com) where you can rent a car from locals. We did it pretty often and it always worked. There are also free busses to nearby places such as Kallaste and Alatskivi, which are beautiful towns near the Peipsi lake which is also worth a visit.

There are also some towns / cities which are not that beautiful, for example Narva and Mustvee. In Mustvee there is just nothing, don't go there. In Narva you can see Russia and you can see the eastern architecture throughout the whole city. It was cool to visit it, but don't expect a beautiful city.

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

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

We cooked a lot at home, but for restaurants we checked Tripadvisor. In Tartu La Dolce Vita and Kolm Tili were some nice restaurants which are worth a try. In Riga I would

definitely recommend Folkklubs Ala Pagrabs, really cool restaurant in a former gun cellar. Going out in Tartu I would suggest Möku, Gunpowder (traditional music and live music pretty often), Pühaste has their own brewery with a lot of special beers and try some shots in Trepp, they have a lot of different shots and Estonian people walk in to get 20 shots with their friends, drink them and 5 minutes later they are heading to a pub or club.

## 7.Challenges & best moment abroad

### What was a challenge you have experienced?

I actually don't know, the time flew and everything went really smooth.

### What was your best memory abroad?

Best memory is all the people I have met during my time in Estonia, we still have contact after Erasmus. Everyone hanged out with each other on the first days without knowing each other. The first evening I played cards with people I have never seen in my life from all different countries. That was truly amazing.

## 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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