



WUR Goes Abroad

1. Student Information

Field of study in Wageningen	Bsc Soil Water Atmosphere
Study period exchange (dd/mm/yyyy)	31/08/2021 until 23/12/2021
Country (exchange)	Finland
City (exchange)	Helsinki
University (exchange)	University of Helsinki
Faculty (exchange)	Physics

2. Motivation for exchange

Why did you choose to go on study exchange?

For the experience of living abroad and follow arctic climate change courses focusing so I could learn a bit more about the arctic and Nordic climate.

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

I chose this university, because I liked the courses that were offered and wanted to go to a Nordic country. Also I heard from other students that they had a really good time there and liked the university of Helsinki and Helsinki is nice as a place to go on exchange to.

3. Accessibility to reach destination

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

I went twice by plane, because I had to delay my flight back due to corona, but I also know that there are a few more climate friendly options. Namely, a boat from Helsinki to Germany from there taking the train towards the Netherlands. Another option is taking the Flixbus to Tallinn and then the boat to Helsinki, I think that would also be the cheapest option. Another option is taking the train to Tallinn and then the boat.

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	Atmospheric flow dynamics and structures	5	Physics course about atmospheric flow dynamics and structures. A lot of fluid dynamics and physical calculations. Every week 2 lectures and a tutorial with exercises that needed to be handed in for a grade. Final grade was a combination of the exercises during the period and the final exam.	3	It was a bit hard for me since I think I did not master all the physics that was required before starting the course, but with some help from the Introduction tutor I passed.
2	Frozen ground	5	Course about the dynamics in permafrost. Every week two lectures about the physical processes that influence permafrost. Also general information about permafrost was provided. Grading consisted of making permafrost model and presentation about a scientific article about the physics and dynamics of permafrost	4	Very interesting course, nice way of teaching by doing your own research but also providing information about the dynamics of permafrost in the form of lectures. Also working with Python was incorporated.
3	Aerosol physics	5	Course about aerosol physics. Bachelor course with more indepth information about Aerosols and their influence on processes in the atmosphere. Grading consists of exercises, presentation and exam.	3	Lot of freedom for topic presentation very nice teachers, but was relatively easy, especially at the beginning. Later on more in depth. Lectures and exercises overlapped well.
4	Cloud physics	5	You will learn how clouds work and how precipitation develops	4	Nice course, at first a bit repetitive, but soon new more indepth information about formation of clouds.

			in warm and cold clouds		Sometimes the exercises did not really overlap with the context of the lectures
5	Arctic climate change	5	The course introduces past, present and future climatic changes in the Arctic and its impacts on various ecosystems and landscape elements using topical examples, comprehensive scientific literature and critical thinking of processes involved. The course deals with terrestrial, aquatic and marine realms and introduces several research approaches in a frame of critical thinking.	5	Very nice course with different lecturers that all specialised in another topic around arctic climate change. Very nice and open atmosphere. Sometimes a bit repetitive.
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How is the study formalized? (E.g. study forms, academic level, examination, workload, lesson material)

Most courses work in a exercises, exam way. Throughout the period you have to hand in exercises which are graded and these form a certain percentage of your final grade. Afterwards there is an exam or a final assignment that needs to be done these often form the main part of your grade. The grades go from 1 till 5 where 5 is the highest and 1 is the lowest. A 1 means that you have a sufficient grade. If you don't get a sufficient grade you get no grade.

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 lecturers are very approachable and interested in student welfare. Lecturers asked for a lot of input of students which was nice.

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

The university offers, sport complexes throughout the entire city with big fully equipped gyms, sports lessons and sometimes a swimmingpool. Also in every building or near every building there is a student café where student can lunch for only 2,60 and for that price can choose for meat, fish, vegan or vegetarian meals besides that a salad and bread are included. The student cafés were a good way to save money, because it was the cheapest way to eat a full meal which was also well nutritious.

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?)

Housing is spread over the city you are assigned to an accommodation relatively close to the campus you are most often at.

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

People are a bit more reserved, but once you get to know them they are very friendly. Student life in Helsinki is also something on their own. They organise lots of activities and every student has an overall that is the colour of their faculty. For every activity you can get a patch and these patches can be sewn on to the overalls. Very active students walk around with overalls so full it is not even possible anymore to find an empty spot.

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

The house pricing is approximately double the prices you pay in Wageningen.

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

For public transport you get a card and then you can travel freely for 1 euro per day (you 30 euros per month). This card is very important, because you will use the public transport a lot to go anywhere.

6. Free time

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

There are several national parks which are around an hour by public transport. These are a must to go to and if you are at it make sure to bring some matches and some snacks to grill, because Finns love to barbecue and in these national parks there are a lot of fireplaces meant to grill. Furthermore inside the city you should go to the harbour, visit the churches and walk through the streets of the city centre around Christmas, because there are so many lights. Also you cannot miss going to café regatta a typical Nordic outside café at the seaside where you can get hot chocolate and a cinnamon bun. Also there are a lot of islands to visit especially Suomenlinna is very pretty. From Helsinki it is also very easy to go to Estonia for only 10 euros you book a ferry back and forth to Tallinn and also here there is a Christmas market in the city centre. Also Porvoo a small village close to Helsinki is really nice to visit. There you find the typical wooden houses that are so famous in the Nordic countries. If you get the chance you should also really go to Lapland in winter. This is ofcourse not very close but by far the best experience of my exchange.

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

I think it is really cool in Helsinki that you can very easily forget that you're in a city, because a lot of the times there is a sudden break of the city because there is just a forest there. I would say that everyone should really explore there surroundings, because it is really easy to get sucked in by all the known places in the city centre or on the islands, but there are also very pretty nature sights very close to your house.

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

For going out you should go to the Irish pub, here they sell the cheapest beer and you can find an exchange students almost always there. We also went to a restaurant called Flat no 14, here they served amazing brunch, it was not cheap but definitely worth it!

7.Challenges & best moment abroad

What was a challenge you have experienced?

I think Helsinki was an amazing time, but one thing I do remember is the money struggle. Everything is so expensive, in the beginning I kept track of that but quickly everyone just decided that we were not going to think about it that much. I do recommend getting alcohol from Tallinn, but besides that I would say enjoy your time as much as you can.

What was your best memory abroad?

I think the people I met are the most important thing. It is crazy how quickly you can grow so close in a short time in a foreign place. But also the trip to Lapland is a trip I will always remember. Such an impressive place and so so beautiful. And as a cherry on top I got to see the Nothern lights three nights in a row!

8. Contact details (optional)

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