



WUR Goes Abroad

1. Student Information

Field of study in Wageningen	BSc International Development Studies
Study period exchange (dd/mm/yyyy)	16/08/2021 until 20/12/2021
Country (exchange)	Norway
City (exchange)	Trondheim
University (exchange)	NTNU
Faculty (exchange)	n.a.

2. Motivation for exchange

Why did you choose to go on study exchange?

I wanted to experience living and studying abroad.

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

Beforehand, I did not have a preferred university or even a country, I based my choice on countries and cities that seemed interesting to live and study in, from this selection I eventually chose the university which had the most interesting courses.

3. Accessibility to reach destination

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

I considered going by train, but that implied a 35 hour train ride. That would not have been that much of a problem if I could spread this over a couple of days with limited luggage. However, because of all the stuff you need when you are moving to another (cold) country, dragging all that luggage from train to train and hostel to hostel did not really appeal to me. So in the end I went by plane.

However, during my exchange, I met a couple of guys from Germany and the Netherlands who travelled by car to Trondheim. Although I did not do it myself, I can really recommend travelling this way. You can take almost as much as stuff as you want, but more importantly; you can travel around Norway easily and cheaply. The group I spent my time on exchange with had the luxury of three cars available for going on trips.

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	Biodiversity and Conservation Biology I	7.5		5	
2	Politics of Climate Change	7.5		3	
3	Geopolitical Risk	7.5		4	This course was surprisingly fun, for I do not really like political courses. The lecturer of this course is passionate and enthusiastic and makes it bearable to follow lectures on Monday evening from 17.00-19.00.
4	Introduction to Norway	7.5		4	This was a kind of last resort course for I was denied all the other courses. Although they try to sell it otherwise, the course is known for as a 'easy pass'. It is indeed not the hardest course and the workload is low, but because the NTNU is a technical university many students tend to underestimate it and fail to write a decent paper as exam. I really liked it for you get to know the country's history, culture, and political system.
5					
6					

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

Studying at the NTNU is quite similar to studying at WUR. They use lectures, group work and individual papers as teaching methods. The workload and academic level is also comparable to what is expected from students at WUR. A major difference is the layout of the semester, instead of three separate periods with one or two courses, you have one semester in which you follow four courses simultaneously. It was different from what I was used to, but if you keep in mind that you have four courses to worry about, it is easy to get around. Another difference is the exam period, instead of one week of self-study and one week of exams, you have (depending on how long the course lasts) approximately two weeks of self-study and four weeks of exams. If you follow courses from one faculty, they will be spread over weeks. But if you follow courses from different faculties, chances are that you have two exams on one day or three exams in one week.

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?)

Education in Norway is quite informal, teachers are addressed with their first names and it is encouraged to help other students. The first time I heard a student's question answered by another student instead of the teacher I was a little surprised. But after a while you get used to it and you see the value of it.

When I had a question, I could email the professor and in all cases they responded within two days.

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

The student welfare organization SIT, offers most of the facilities and they are very good. Every building holds a cafeteria with delicious and nutritious food and a café with coffee (though there are no coffee machines like at WUR, so after 16.30 it is hard to get coffee). And every week they have several offers like free porridge or free meals at certain places. Furthermore, they have several well equipped gyms spread around the city, the biggest one on Gløshaugen-campus even has a sauna. The gyms also have group lessons, similar to the ones offered at the Bongerd. The university itself also has sports unions like from climbing to dancing and surfing to skiing, almost everything you can think of.

If you live at a student village, you can use the laundromats to do your laundry. Frankly, I was not a big fan, you have to pay 20NOK (approx. 2€) every time you used a machine and I did not really feel like my clothes came out clean.

Furthermore, SIT provides medical care, both physically and mentally.

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?)

There is a possibility of living in student villages where you have to sign up for through SIT. If you do not get a room through SIT, private housing offers a lot of other possibilities, but is most often more expensive, though not excessively expensive. Prices for housing in student villages is on average 450€, private housing between 500-650€, from what I have heard.

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

The culture is a bit similar to that of the Netherlands in terms of what we value and what we like to eat. However, from my experience, Norwegians are not really outgoing or spontaneous, in the sense that they almost never just 'chat' and are keen on their personal space. So don't be surprised if you step into a bus during rush hour, and you see people crammed in the aisle though there are plenty of seats left. But as soon as you get to know them or need their help, they are very friendly and welcoming.

Furthermore, Trondheim feels very 'safe', I have walked home by myself after 23.00 several times and never felt unsafe.

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

Norway is really expensive, but with a bit of savings, the study loan and the Erasmus grant you can live 'normally' and do loads of fun stuff like going out and going on cabin trips. Going to a club is expensive though, when going to a club, you pay 15-20€ entrance, and a beer generally costs 7-10€. Bars and cafés are free to enter, but the

beer prices are similar. Circus Bar has the cheapest beer in town, 5€ for a 0.5L. It is a rock bar so it might not be for everyone.

In general, buying alcohol in Norway is a bit different than what non-Scandinavians are used to. If you want to buy drinks with an alcohol percentage above 4,9, you have to go to a state-owned shop where a bottle of wine easily costs 10€.

Day to day life in general is more expensive, when doing groceries you have to add approximately 1-2€ on every product you can find.

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

The public transport is very well organized, though a bit expensive. I lived at Moholt Studentby (=student village) which had its own bus stop that had a direct connection to the two campuses and the city center. What I found quite astonishing is that you do not have to check in/show your ticket when you enter a bus, they only check randomly if you have a valid ticket and seem to work on a system of trust.

6. Free time

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

In the city itself, you should see Bakklandet, it is an old working-class district with tiny houses in different colors. The neighborhood is home to different cafés (Antikvariatet is a small beer café and decorated with old stuff and a lot of books) and restaurants and even a tattoo shop. You can also see the famous Gamle Bybro, the old bridge, with its nice red wooden construction where you can see Bakklandet from a different angle.

Trondheim is surrounded by two beautiful nature parks: Bymarka and Estenstadmarka. It takes about 15 minutes to go to the parks by bus, depending on where you are in the city. When there is snow, you should definitely go cross country skiing (langlaufen) in Bymarka.

The sports association of the university, NTNUI, has a lot of cabins spread across Trøndelag where you can spend time going back to basic. I really recommend taking advantage of this opportunity, it is the perfect way to get the Norwegian outdoor lifestyle. And all cabins are reachable by public transport and a hike. As I said, we had cars at our disposal and made it easier to go on these trips.

One thing you must do if you get the chance is going to the Lofoten in the north of Norway. This archipelago is stunningly beautiful, there are high pointy mountains everywhere you look, surrounded by clear blue water. You can do a lot of really cool hikes here.

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

Everywhere you go in Norway you can expect beautiful sights. I would recommend going on NTNUI-cabin trips as well as cabins offered at Airbnb. Also going to Sweden might be fun, I have not been there myself but Åre is a nice skiing area and is not that far from Trondheim.

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

I would recommend joining a student sports association, I joined the surf association and it turned out to be the perfect way to meet Norwegians. As much as I liked my friends who all were exchange students, meeting people who actually lived there was also really fun because I got to know the country and culture even better.

7.Challenges & best moment abroad

What was a challenge you have experienced?

To be honest, my time in Norway went that smoothly that I did not really have to overcome a challenge. The only thing I can think of is that I got scared during hiking when it got too high or the edges too steep, but reaching the top in the end gave you the best feeling.

What was your best memory abroad?

In general, I get really happy thinking of all the trips I made with the people I met. But seeing the Northern Lights during our trip to the Lofoten was unbelievable. It was not only seeing the lights, but the trip itself was incredible and the Northern Lights made it even more special.

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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