



WUR Goes Abroad

1. Student Information

Field of study in Wageningen	BBI
Study period exchange (dd/mm/yyyy)	19/01/2022 until 31/05/2022
Country (exchange)	Norway
City (exchange)	Bergen
University (exchange)	Bergen University
Faculty (exchange)	Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences

2. Motivation for exchange

Why did you choose to go on study exchange?

When we got the introduction about studying abroad, it already peaked my interest. I really wanted to experience a different way of teaching and it had the added plus of the experience of being in a different country, getting familiar with a different language and culture, which really convinced me to try and get accepted.

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

I had been to Scandinavia on holiday before, and really liked the countries and the culture they have. When I was looking into universities, Bergen caught my attention because of the courses they have for biology students.

3. Accessibility to reach destination

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

There is an airport of Bergen itself and with the lightrail (kind of like the tram) you can get to the centre very easily. The lightrail also goes by several of the student housings, so then it is often only a short walk or a few minutes with the bus. Car is not recommended, because there are hardly any parking space, and if you can find one it is a paid space. Also all roads except some small ones are toll roads, so driving around can become quite expensive.

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	Evolutionary Biology (BIO210)	10	In this course you get an understanding of how evolution works, and general knowledge about the most important research questions in evolutionary biology	4	The subjects discussed are very interesting, but it is a lot to read in a relatively short time.
2	Behavioural Ecology (BIO241)	10	The course focuses on fundamental concepts in behavioural ecology with an emphasis on evolutionary theories and empirical testing of animal behaviour. The interactions between an individual's interest, competition, cooperation and social behaviour are central. How animals find resources, select prey and avoid predation are important topics, along with sexual selection, reproductive investment and parental care.	5	The way of tackling this course was really fun, with a lot of interaction with your classmates and a lot of teamwork. It is also a lot to read, but you are working with the read materials in class, so it sticks.

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

The courses I followed were all undergraduate courses, but they are certainly not beginner courses. You have to read a lot on your own, otherwise you won't understand the lecture and you will not be able to participate in the team-based lessons, so the workload is quite big. But because you have plenty of opportunity to discuss the read chapters and ask questions, you really get a good understanding of the topics. The examination differs per course. For one course there was a midterm exam, which is part of the grade, while for the other course, we had to do a poster presentation. It is common to end the course with an oral exam.

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?)

Everything on campus is pretty informal. Lecturers can be called by their first name, and often they will give their email and phone number for any questions you have. There is a lot of interaction between the lecturer and students, but also between students themselves.

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

There is a cafeteria in many of the buildings of the university where you can get food and drinks from 8.00-14.00. You can get in the university buildings on the weekends or on holidays if you have a student card, so you always have a quiet place to study or do your group work. There is also an university museum and a beautiful garden to visit for free if you have a student card. Most of the other facilities like sport or laundry are provided by the housing company Sammen.

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?)

For international students from the Erasmus exchange program, you can make an account at Sammen. Then you can select a top 3 of rooms you would like, but your placement there is not guaranteed (I got a completely different room in a different building). Sammen has student housing all over Bergen, both close to campus but also further away like Fantoft. Since there is also a room shortage in Bergen for students, the choice is not very big, but there are many different kinds of rooms. You could have your whole own apartment, or share a bathroom and kitchen with other people (like I did), it really depends on what is available. Rent is quite expensive (for 9 m², shared kitchen and bathroom I paid €540), but this also depends on what kind of room you have. Most rooms do come with a wardrobe, bed, desk and chair, so you don't have to worry about getting those, and if they are not in the room when you arrive, you can always call Sammen, and they will bring it to you.

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

There is not much difference between Bergen and the Netherlands. Most of the foods in the Netherlands you will also be able to find in Bergen (although it will be much more expensive) and in my time there, I didn't really miss anything. The cuisine here is also not very different, apart from the fact that people often eat something warm for lunch. The main difference in manners is that you don't greet anyone on the street. People in Bergen and Norway in general are very to themselves, so if you walk by someone, they often look away or at the ground. Also in public transport you will never find a Norwegian just starting a conversation with you. It is a plus however, that everyone, even the older people, know quite a bit of English, so in shops and supermarkets, there is no problem if you need to ask something or by check out.

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

Everything is more expensive. Just be prepared to pay €4 for a bell pepper 😊

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

You can often walk to the places you need to be. If you don't want to do that or if it is too far, you can either take the bus or the lightrail, both can be used with the same ticket. You can buy a ticket for 90 min., which is kr 40, so a bit more than €4. However, you can

also buy a period ticket for varying amount of time (24h, 7 days, 30 days or 180 days). With a student card, you get a discount for most tickets, making the prices kr105, kr140, kr455, kr2265. With these tickets you can use the bus, the lightrail and the ferry in and around Bergen. I don't recommend a taxi or renting a car, because it is quite expensive (e.g. from the airport to centre bergen, which is only 20km, the price is around €70). There are also Bergen city Bikes, you can pick up at many places, and stall them near you your destination, but the can be quite steep hills, and there isn't a biking lane everywhere, so you either have to bike on the sidewalk, or in some places on the street, which can be scary. There are also many companies that have electric scooters available, which you pay per minute you use it (prices can differ per company).

6. Free time

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

If you go to Bergen, you have to go to Bryggen, which is the old centre. There are a lot of souvenir shops there and it is really fun to see the old houses. The university museum is also recommended (which also has a nice café, so that's a bonus). There is also a cable car that goes up the highest mountain of Bergen (Ulriken), which gives you a beautiful view over Bergen and the surrounding places. This is a bit expensive though. You can also take a little train up another mountain (Fløyen), which is fun as well. If you like animals, you should go to the aquarium (Akvariet i Bergen), this is quite a walk, but it is a nice aquarium with many different species.

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

Near the campus of natural sciences (Høyteknologisenter) is the entrance of a beautiful park. It is quite a climb up, but the view is beautiful and the park itself as well. I would also recommend to just take a walk along the water behind the campus buildings, when the weather permits. If you have the chance you should also venture out of Bergen and towards the coast for a day, the nature there is very beautiful and something different from Bergen itself.

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

You have to get out when the sun shines. Bergen is known for its rainy weather, so when the sun finally shines, don't think and just go out, go on a hike or walk around town. In the centre of Bergen there is a sushi place called Sabrura stick & sushi, where they have a sushi buffet for a relatively low price but very good quality. Across from the sushi place there is also a Chinese restaurant which I can definitely recommend. For just a nice cup of coffee or some lunch you should visit Baker Brun, they have shops all over Bergen. There is also a quiz night every Wednesday at Ad Fontes, a student organization, which is really fun to do with friends every now and then.

7.Challenges & best moment abroad

What was a challenge you have experienced?

Figuring everything out on my own, where the shops are, where campus is, how the public transport works. But although this was quite a challenge, it was also a very fun experience and some things you can only learn if you do them.

What was your best memory abroad?

I made some great friends in my classes, both international students but also native Norwegians. Everyone is very nice and because you have a whole semester with the same people, you really get a chance to get to know each other. We had some great days exploring the city together and trying some new food places, you wouldn't normally do on your own.

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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