



# WUR Goes Abroad

## 1. Student Information

<b>Field of study in Wageningen</b>	Soil, Water, Atmosphere
<b>Study period exchange (dd/mm/yyyy)</b>	12/01/2022 until 31/05/2022
<b>Country (exchange)</b>	Finland
<b>City (exchange)</b>	Helsinki
<b>University (exchange)</b>	University of Helsinki
<b>Faculty (exchange)</b>	Science

## 2. Motivation for exchange

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

I chose to study abroad to experience studying in another city, at a new university, with new people. I have always been eager to go abroad and wanted to do this for a longer time. The idea of studying in a new place seemed nice to me. I also wanted to focus more on the atmospheric part of my study (Soil, Water, Atmosphere). There are not so many atmospheric courses in Wageningen, my home university, that I could follow. In some other universities there were more of them. It sounded appealing to follow more atmospheric courses for half a year, as a sort of specialisation.

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

Helsinki University offered the most atmospheric courses of the universities I had in mind for the Erasmus. There was a whole master on atmospheric science, so I was attracted to this large amount of interesting courses.

## 3. Accessibility to reach destination

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

There are many ways to reach Helsinki. From the Netherlands, it is easy to take the boat from Lübeck to Helsinki. That takes 29 hours and is direct. Some students I met during my Erasmus have done this. It is also easy to take a plane to Helsinki from the Netherlands. Planes from Helsinki do not fly often to a lot of destinations, but Amsterdam is not a problem. For students who are closer to Helsinki than us in the Netherlands, it can be easy to take the public transport. The ferry from Tallinn to Helsinki for example, is very good.

## 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	Convective Weather Systems and Climate	5	Teaches about convection, air dynamics around the equator, climate, in a very visual way.	5	Very interesting and visual course. Learned a lot of new material. Unique. Can immediately use the knowledge in practice, when you are looking outside for example.
2	Atmospheric General Circulation	5	Interpreting many graphs of circulation in the atmosphere on a large scale. Also calculations and equations abundantly used.	4	Workload was high, but the content was very in depth and interesting.
3	Advanced course in Radar Meteorology	5	Lots of theory about weather radars, how they work and how the radar images are interpreted. Also homework with Python is included.	3	Interesting new material and teaches some practical skills. Nice for people who want to do more with weather radar data.
4	Mesometeorology	5	Similar teaching method as Convective Weather Systems and Climate. This course is mainly about mesoscale weather phenomena. Often storms. Very visual teaching again	5	Very interesting weather phenomena, often related to Finnish weather. When you look outside, you can already use the new knowledge
5	Atmosphere of planets from our solar system and beyond	5	New course, full of interesting material about other planets and moons. Focus is on the atmosphere, but also more about space and the earth is taught.	5	Very renewing course. Has interesting lectures and guest lectures. Makes you curious about space.
6	Satellite Remote Sensing Methods in Aerosol Science	5	Lectures about satellites and how it is used for meteorology. Aerosols studied in detail. Very practical homework, where you have to use Python or Matlab for using satellite data,	4	Relatively high workload if you are unfamiliar with coding. Topics of the course were interesting. The work you have to do felt very professional.

		often making maps out of these.		
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**How is the study formalized? (E.g. study forms, academic level, examination, workload, lesson material)**

The courses can sometimes have a very high workload, sometimes it is much less. Very often you get weekly homework, for which you are already given some points. These points are included in the grade of the course. Exams are not always included in the course. It can be a final project such as a report, or even a reflection, or a presentation. I feel like courses in the university of Helsinki require more *doing*, compared to Wageningen, which has more self-study in my field. The academic level is still high. The teachers really think well about how to make the course meaningful, and how it can teach you a lot. Exams that I had were normal level, comparable to the course, and gave you a lot of time (probably still due to Covid). The workload feels less than Wageningen University, because of the points you can already get in the homework. In Wageningen there is a self-study week, whereas in Helsinki there is not, unfortunately.

**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 lectures were very kind and approachable in every course. In classes that were held on campus again, I felt like the students were a bit shy. They did not speak up much, but rather only listened. When doing a project with the local students, they seemed to be very nice and took the project serious. At the WUR, local students tend to be more active in a lecture. They ask more questions from what I have seen. However, I think that Finnish students work more seriously. They are just a bit more individual.

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

After half of the Erasmus period had been over, the Unicafes opened, where you could get lunch. In the city centre, the catering was open until later, so you could have dinner there too. They did not open until very late, so students that liked to eat at later hours (often from the south of Europe), could not easily have that from the university. I followed courses at Kumpula Campus, where sport facilities were also open. However, I did not use these. I have not seen laundry facilities at the campus. In Unihome, there were 8 washing machines and a good drying room (with limited opening hours, which closed rather early in my opinion).

## 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?)**

Erasmus students can get a studio or shared apartment from the University. They will reserve them for you until you accept the room. I did not hear of anyone having trouble finding housing. I was away from the centre and a bit away from Kumpula campus, but there are many other options. The rent was not cheap, but you got a whole studio for it, and a reception, laundry room. You could use second hand furniture from the reception. They were very strict about the opening hours, making use of digital locks, so you had to

follow these strict times. The people that lived in a room with shared kitchen also could not get into their kitchen after a certain time.

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

The Finnish culture is different from the Netherlands. Finnish people tend to be more reserved and talk a bit less than the Dutch people, who are said to be direct. The Finnish stereotype is the opposite, though. They tend to be introvert, although I have also met many nice Finns with whom you can chat a lot. Finnish people tend to want to live in their own place, whereas lots of Dutch students live with many others. Finns tend to go outside their house to socialise.

The cuisine of Finland does not have many fresh fruits and vegetables, as it has to be imported. Pea soup is a dish that is very Dutch and Finnish. I feel like Finnish and Dutch traditional cuisine are quite similar, as it features many products that grow in colder conditions.

What I heard on the campus, is that it is rather strange to eat your own lunch on campus. It is very normal in the university of Helsinki, to get your lunch at Unicafe. In the Netherlands, it is very common to eat your own bread at the place of your liking on the campus.

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

I believe that for food, you can easily pay 50% more than in Wageningen. This amount can also get more. Fresh products are very expensive, and the rest is also a bit more expensive than in the Netherlands.

Alcohol is significantly more expensive, I believe it is easily twice the price from the Netherlands.

Other products than food and alcohol do not have such a high price compared to Dutch prices.

**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 in Helsinki, and outside regions, is very good. There are many buses going to a lot of destinations. There are trains in the city centre, going mainly north-south but very often. There is also a tram system and an underground system. All in all, you can take many different kinds of transport to your location, and the waiting time is very short in the city. The longest I had to wait is maybe 10 minutes. Also the price is not high. A single ticket is 2.80 euros. The system works in zones. The more zones you travel through, the more expensive it will be. Still, compared to Dutch public transport, I believe the prices here are not so high. I had a student discounted subscription for zones A and B (city centre and first ring around it) which cost 35 euros per month.

## **6. Free time**

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

The city has nice museums, restaurants and bars, a lot of karaoke bars, and parks. The sea is very accessible with many parks that are next to it. Islands that are close by are nice to visit and easy to reach by ferry. Helsinki is surrounded by nature areas such as Paloheina (good for cross country skiing), Sipoonkorpi, and Nuuksio. There are many barbeque places in the latter two national parks. Sipoonkorpi also has saunas. Sompasauna is a popular open and free sauna, run by volunteers.

In the spring and summer, the market stalls on the market square opens, and also city bikes are installed.

Everything is easy to reach by public transport, I mainly used the bus.

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

I do not know what is in the travel guide, so I could not tell.

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

I really liked to visit the national parks that I mentioned two questions before. Good restaurants are all around. I recently went to Levant, which is very good. Sushi bars are also abundant and they are relatively cheap. Also a large Italian bar/café/restaurant in the central train station is good. For going out, the Irish Pub is famous amongst the students.

## 7.Challenges & best moment abroad

**What was a challenge you have experienced?**

Because a lot of students live in studios, it sometimes can be difficult to meet people. You always have to plan it. I am used to living in a big student complex with plenty of people around, who you can socialise with at random times. In Helsinki, I did not have a big kitchen where we would come together. I missed this sometimes.

**What was your best memory abroad?**

My best memory is not one, but several. It is the joy of spending time with friends, in each other's studio or a chosen place to gather. During holidays somewhere in Finland, I have had amazing times with other people. My best memories were just getting along with new, nice people.

## 8. Contact details (optional)

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