



# WUR Goes Abroad

## 1. Student Information

<b>Field of study in Wageningen</b>	Food Technology
<b>Study period exchange (dd/mm/yyyy)</b>	03/01/2022 until 31/05/2022
<b>Country (exchange)</b>	Finland
<b>City (exchange)</b>	Jyväskylä
<b>University (exchange)</b>	University of Jyväskylä
<b>Faculty (exchange)</b>	Mathematics and Science

## 2. Motivation for exchange

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

I mainly wanted to go to another country to study and to experience something else after studying in Wageningen for 3,5 years.

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

Because of covid, the original destination I was accepted for kept cancelling it. As I really wanted to experience an exchange period, I searched for open spots and found this university as the only one in north Europe, what I preferred as destination. I wanted to go to the north as the quality of the education is high, the English good, and the environment and culture attracted me the most beforehand. This university did not offer courses in the field of my study in Wageningen, but that sounded for me even better as I wanted to also go out of the familiar field I had been studying so far.

## 3. Accessibility to reach destination

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

The easiest possibility is to take a plane to Helsinki, and then take the VR train to Jyväskylä for around 3,5 hours. They also have a direct bus, the onnibus, and the travel time is approximately the same but it doesn't depart from the airport. It is most of the time a bit cheaper. Keep in mind that the prices of the trains and busses increases over time, so if you want to have the cheapest possible ticket, you should book it in advance.

If you want to travel green, you can take several routes, but they will all takes you a few days. You can go via Germany, Denmark, Sweden and then take the ferry from Stockholm to Turku. This ferry takes around 12 hours. From Turku, you can take a VR train or Onnibus to Jyväskylä, which takes around 4,5 hours. You can also take for example a ferry from Hamburg to Helsinki, which takes around 30 hours.

## 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	KEMY004 Introduction to Finnish Laboratory Work	1	This is an obligatory course to be allowed to do labwork later in the courses.	1	It feels really unnecessary as it is all clear from the bachelors, but unfortunately you have to do and pass it.
2	KEMS5370 Chromatographic methods	3	This is a theoretical course about all different types of chromatographic methods.	4	It is a nice course, and the teacher was nice too.
3	KEMS534 Basic Principles of Mass Spectrometry	4	This is a theoretical course about how MS works and how to interpret the results of a mass spectrum.	4	I did this as a independent study course. This worked out pretty well, even though the lectures I could watch were in Finnish. The teacher was accessible via email to ask possible question.
4	KEMS535 Practical Methods of Mass Spectrometry	2	This is a follow-up course of the KEMS534. It was based on analysing a given compound yourself with this instrument.	4	A few lectures were given, after which you have to make your own analysis plan and perform the mass spectrometry experiment on your given compound yourself.
5	KEMS531 Introduction to Material Chemistry	4	Even though it is called "introduction", it is an advanced organic chemistry course about all types of polymers.	5	I did this as an independent study course and had to do exercises to pass it. They were quite advanced and took way more time than expected. Somewhat related to my field of study, but different than the WUR courses taught me so far.
6	KEMS5380 Basics of NMR Spectroscopy	4	This was a theoretical course about the technique behind NMR spectroscopy and how to analyse the results	4	It was the most difficult course I have followed here. I did not really like the way it was taught, as the lectures were copied from the book. I watched a lot of youtube videos, and these visuals finally helped me to understand it.
7	KEMS6880 Advanced Laboratory Exercises of Analytical Chemistry	Mostly between 2-4	This "course" contains several small experimental projects.	4	You have to contact the teacher of a certain topic yourself and they will guide you individually or in a group of 2. You do an experiment and write a report about it afterwards.

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

The courses are all offered in a different way than the WUR does. At the start, I was very confused that all the courses I chose were only theoretical. Then I figured out that they have a “course” where you do a miniproject(s) in the laboratory. You have to contact a teacher yourself and agree on the time you can do it.

The level of the courses however were good. In the regular courses, I sometimes felt that I missed some previous knowledge, so some parts of courses were quite challenging. Some of the ones I could take sounded so different and therefore difficult that I didn't dared to try them. The choice of courses is therefore limited. I only did courses from the department of chemistry, but you are also allowed to take courses from mathematics, physics, biology and environmental sciences.

I did taught courses as well as independent study courses. Taught courses do not differ that much from the ones of the WUR. They gives lectures in somewhat the same way. I noticed however that the group of students at the courses were really small and therefore the lectures were more interactive.

I also did 2 courses fully independent. At first I didn't want to do that, but because of the limited choice I decided to try. It turned out that I surprisingly liked it. The freedom to do the course whenever you want is somewhat challenging, but also really nice. Especially during an exchange as there is always a lot going on and you don't have to miss out on something as you can schedule your study yourself. That is of course a benefit, but also asks more independence and perseverance from yourself.

The examination is very different from the WUR. I only did one exam on paper at a certain time. The others were different. I had an exam for a course I could schedule myself. At the agreed time, the online questions opened and I had to do hand them in maximum 4 hours later. I did that one just at home, but not with any special software as the WUR did during covid. Other courses had exercises I had to do and hand in whenever I wanted. They included questions, but also writing a summary or essay about an article or certain topic related to the course content.

Overall, I really learned new things in a different field of studies, with different types of teaching methods and examination.

**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 courses I followed were all in small groups. The teachers were very approachable. All of them mentioned at the start that you could always send an email if you have questions. I had online teaching for the first 2 months during my exchange and during that time I did most of my regular taught courses, so I cannot tell if they are also doing that with on-campus courses, but I would guess they do. Furthermore, a lot of them have their office number and sometimes even their phone number in their first lecture, and/or signature of their email.

As I started my exchange with 2 months of online teaching, it was difficult to get in contact with students. However, you get a tutor group assigned, that consists out of a local student of your field and other exchange students of the same field. My tutor helped me get into the university and pointed out study association activities for us.

The students I met from the chemistry department were not really open unfortunately. My tutor helped us in the first place by introducing us, but as everything and everyone was Finnish, they were for us not really approachable.

On the other hand, I went to a lot of activities of other study associations of friends I made and I had a better impression of them. They were very open and assessable. My start was difficult for this because of covid. I think without that start it will be even easier to meet more Finnish students.

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

The university has a lot of buildings on the campus which almost all have a student restaurant. With the Finnish student card, you can have a meal for 2,70. This includes a salad, a drink, a warm dish (you can choose between at least 2, one vegetarian), and bread. You can pick as much as you want. You have to buy the student card at the start. It is an online student card, via the "Frank app". You have to pay 50 euros for it, but it is more than worth it, as you also get the greatest discounts in the whole country for countless different things. Always check before you buy anything if the frank app offers a discount!

There were laundry rooms in some buildings. I had to book a washing machine and/or dryer online and then I could use it. There were also laundry rooms available without booking, so first come first serve.

Also a gym was available at both student housings. It was included in the rent to use it.

From the university, you have UMove, and for 40 euros you can use the gym(s) of the university and do sports classes. They offer a lot of different classes and you can sign in online if you want to participate.

## **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?)**

You are offered a room if you want to. During your application, you can fill in whether you want a room via student housing in Jyväskylä. By far the most exchange students did that. They have two possibilities: a room via KOAS or Soihtu. The main difference is the location. Soihtu has houses in the student village "Kortepohja". Not only (exchange) students live here, also other people. In KOAS, you live at the other side of the city than Kortepohja, and further away from the centre with a fewer amount of exchange students. It has both shared flats, which you would most likely share with another (or 2/3) exchange student(s). After the application procedure, you just get an offer so you cannot choose the room or the roommate. However, during the application, you can give a preference for either one of the housing companies and with whom you possibly want to live with.

Kortepohja has in comparison with KOAS facilities as a student restaurant, workspaces, saunas and a gym. However, KOAS has a very small gym and sauna too. The bus connection with kortepohja and the city centre is very good. For KOAS, it is a bit less.

I lived in Kortepohja in building N. It is one of the older buildings, and I lived there with another girl. It was a small apartment, where we both had a room of a good size, but a very small kitchen and bathroom. The kitchen was already too small for two people, so you cannot cook together. Also, there is no place to sit, so you have to eat in your room. I paid 266 euros per month, so that is a good price for the house you will live in, in my opinion.

I would really recommend Kortepohja. Preferably building S or R, as they are newly renovated and have a shared kitchen with a table and chairs. You will live there in total with 3 or 4 people.

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

The Finns are known to be shy and more introvert people. You definitely notice that walking the streets. Nobody will say hi to you as a stranger, or not even ring their bicycle bell for asking to pass. But the people are very kind. They will offer you help when they see you looking for something, or respond nicely to your questions. They speak very well English, almost all people I met in all different types of situations.

Finland is full of nature. Jyväskylä lies in the lake area and has even some hills. The landscape is super pretty and full of green or white, depending on the season. There is so much nature per person, that you barely pass other people and don't have that much disturbing noises. The city itself is quite small. It has more people than Wageningen, but it is not as crowded. It makes your living here really peaceful, easy and relaxed.

The local cuisine in Finland is for me still unknown. In my opinion, Finland is not a country of food. They have just some typical food things, but I didn't like them. Otherwise, potatoes is apparently the most Finnish... The chocolate bars that the supermarkets sell, however, are amazing :).

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

My rent was 266 euros and this was the lowest possible rent that you can have if you apply for a room via one of the corporations, I believe. This is comparable or for me below the rent of my room in Wageningen. The public transport throughout the country is very cheap compared to the Netherlands, if you book on time with the student discount you have with the Frank app. The city busses are 1,50 per ride. Food is more expensive than the Netherlands. Especially the unhealthy stuff like sugary products or alcohol. They are not comparable at all with the prices at home. The other stuff, however, is more expensive, but most of the time just with a few tenths of cents. Also, entrance fee for e.g. a party is normal. The best thing is that you can have a meal for 2,70 in the student restaurants, as well as all other types of discounts you can get with the Finnish student card.

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

Finland has a good infrastructure within cities as well as with other places. I bought a bike in January and I biked to all places within the city. Biking through the snow was fine, but through the melted

snow substance not so much. Then I sometimes took the bus or walked. The connections are very good. From the university, I got a welcome package which included a bus card to use the bus for free for a week. In the city centre at the bus company "Linkki" office, you can exchange that after use for a buscard where you can either put money on or you can go for a package for e.g. a month. A single ride for a student is 1,50 euros. The taxi is expensive. Going back from the city centre to the student village after a party by taxi costed around 15 euros, so that is only affordable if you share it.

## 6. Free time

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

During most of my exchange period, there was snow. So doing winter sports is a must. There was a small ski area at just one kilometre from my house. They have one hill so just 5 different slopes you can take from different sides of the hill. It is perfect when you are not so experienced. I am not an experienced skier so it was very nice to go there once in a while to do that, and I learned to snowboard there. Cross-country skiing is a big sports in the country too. I did that quite much. For the equipment, they have a season pass for 150 euros. The season card for the lift is a bit more expensive. Otherwise, you can rent it for 15 euros for 3 hours on weekdays with your ESN card. This is also offered for the ski lift. Normal student prices are around 30 euros a day.

Furthermore, Finland has a few cities like Tampere, Turku and Helsinki that are easy to reach and nice to visit for a weekend, or maybe a day of Tampere as it is only 1,5 hour by public transport.

I also visited Lapland at the end of February. This is definitely a great trip to do. I would recommend to do this over anything.

It is also nice to go hiking in the forest. You have some national parks around Jyväskylä, but over the whole country there are a lot of them. I did some hikes while there still was a lot of snow, but visited national parks only from the end of April onwards. Then the snow was almost gone and it started to get green.

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

I have never read a travel guide.. I mainly went to places other people wanted to go to, or from recommendations of people from Finland, or people that visited Finland beforehand.

Maybe one thing that probably doesn't appear in a travel guide is the national holiday Vappu. It is celebrated on the 1<sup>st</sup> of May. Finnish students go crazy the 30<sup>th</sup> of April and the 1<sup>st</sup> of May.

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

In Finland, there are very many fire places. In national parks, they are everywhere, but also at several random places in a forest or at a lake, you find them. A lot of the time, there is a cabin with it and/or toilet, and the wood is supplied. I made a lot of fires and had lunches or dinners there.

In a lot of national parks, there are long hiking trails with cabins you can sleep in and make a fire on the way. You have to take your own sleeping stuff, but you can sleep inside. I didn't have the equipment etc, but if you are into this you could think about taking some stuff with you to Finland or buy it there.

There are several restaurants and clubs/bars in Jyväskylä. I tried a few restaurants and they were all nice. The club I went to the most is Escape. Other possibilities for partying are Heidi's beer bar and Freetime.

## 7.Challenges & best moment abroad

### What was a challenge you have experienced?

I started my exchange period when Covid just got really bad in Finland. Therefore, everything was online and it was somewhat challenging to meet people. Then, after 10 days in Finland, I got Covid myself so I had to isolate. Therefore, I experienced my first month a bit difficult as I had to find my place and some people I like.

### What was your best memory abroad?

It is difficult to point out one thing. I enjoyed the winter weather a lot, as it opened a lot of possibilities to do that are not possible in the Netherlands. On the other hand, the summer weather I had in May was very nice too, as I enjoyed making the fires a lot in the national parks where I hiked and slept in cabins. Mostly the difference in weather and surroundings that caused such a different lifestyle was a great experience.

## 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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