



# WUR Goes Abroad

## 1. Student Information

<b>Field of study in Wageningen</b>	BSc Health and Society
<b>Study period exchange (dd/mm/yyyy)</b>	23-08-2022 until 16-12-2022
<b>Country (exchange)</b>	Finland
<b>City (exchange)</b>	Jyvaskyla
<b>University (exchange)</b>	University of Jyvaskyla
<b>Faculty (exchange)</b>	Philosophy and Social Sciences

## 2. Motivation for exchange

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

I wanted to gain knowledge in a field that I found rather interesting and valuable regarding my own academic field. Moreover, I wanted to experience living and studying abroad.

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

The possibility to study these courses was one of the drivers for choosing this university. But furthermore, the location, ranking and new experience were the reasons.

## 3. Accessibility to reach destination

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

Yes, since you have to travel quite a bit to reach any destination in Finland, it can be useful to check this out as early as possible, since the prices for tickets go up once you enter the departure date. Moreover, make yourself as comfortable when traveling as possible since you probably have to transfer in between the journey, dragging your baggage with you. And even though you have many options to travel within Finland, trains, busses or even ferry or plain, check out which is the most comfortable/cheap beforehand to save yourself some money and time. If lost, everybody is very helpful and always approachable for information! ☺

## 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	Training Intercultural Competencies	5	This course let's you think and informs	5	This course was one of the most interactive courses I

			you about intercultural settings, norms, created boundaries and so one. But, the most important thing about this course was that it was done through a playfull way of learning.		have ever followed and I really liked it.
<b>2</b>	Trends in Development Policy	5	This course was not so much about learning about a certain theory or model but more about different types of policy for different types of systems and situations.	3	
<b>3</b>	Survival Finnish 1	2	The basics needed for practical situations.	5	This was really interesting and fun, I would recommend it if you have the space and time!
<b>4</b>	Conflict and Intergroup Communication	5	An interesting course with influences from intercultural competencies combined with the methodology behind intercultural communication theories and thinkers.	4	
<b>5</b>	Migration in a Globalizing World	5	An interesting viewpoint on migration, incorporating different theoretical approaches and thinkers.	4	
<b>6</b>	Systematic Information Seeking	1	A short individual personal study/tutorial were you learn how to search and reference properly on and within academic levels.	4	

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

For me, it felt like the lessons were a little more practical than compared to the Netherlands. It depends on the course, of course, ☺ But, for me, the workload was a little less intense than in the Netherlands. This meant that for instance there was less fixed group work and articles to prepare, in terms of quantity. Nevertheless, during the lessons, we would dive into the prepared work more thoroughly, where discussions and active participation were more required than compared to my lessons in the Netherlands.

**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?)**

Haha, this question right away makes me questionable, since I studied "culture" there, so they did a good job. But... for me the culture is really open and interactive. You can call the teachers by their First names and ask them many questions. I do not sense like a "hierarchical" system, meaning that teacher interact with their students the same way they would as with other teachers. It is very welcoming!

Yet, since I do sense that Finnish students are not so eager and open to be very talkative, mingling with international students is not very present. But, if you were to approach a Finnish student they would always be open and kind to you.

Compared to the WUR, I think the divide between teacher and student in Finland is even less visible (which I did not think was even more possible). Next to that, I think in Finland the focus lies more on active participation than on quantitative achievements and fixed schedules, making the workload or stress level even lower.

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

There are a lot of student services, which is great! They surely care for their students. The first thing that was very welcoming were the cheap student meals! Before the inflation a student meal in one of the ??? student restaurants was only 2,70 euros, after 3,20! Moreover, when living in one of the student apartments you can make free use of their saunas, gym, and additional facilities such as a BBQ hut, working space, and laundry rooms. You could also join their sports organisation Umove, which is the student gym with additional sportsclasses for little money. And in Finland, as student you get to travel cheaper.

## 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 are multiple options for living. You can sign up for housing, alone, together, with multiple people or people you already know. There are also different housing areas, but they are almost never further away than a 15-minute bike ride. If possible, I would recommend living in Soihitu (housing owner), in the neighbourhood of Kortepohja, since

this is the biggest most modern area where a lot of other exchange students live. It is like a real community which was very nice for me!

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

Living in Finland was definitely an interesting experience. I would say it is a country with interesting influences. It is a progressive culture striving for gender equality which you can see in their Behaviour, very nice! And you can see that Finnish people are very adaptive, which I could notice throughout the changes of the seasons. Therefore, I think the people are quite sober (not in a negative way!) but easy-going. You might be a bit thrown off because Finnish people can come across as quite quiet, but they are very friendly, eager to help, and honest when interacting. I would say the culture represents reliability. Ironically, even in the coldest, darkest situations, which the weather can show ;)

Regarding the local cuisine, it is normal to have two warm meals a day. For breakfast it is normal to have some bread or yoghurt/quark I think and then at noon or around 11-13:00 it is normal to have a warm meal. Often this includes a form of fibers/carbs such as potatoes or rice combined with fish/meat or a veggie option, and some slices of bread and a side salad. Dinnertime start around 5 in the Finnish culture and looks quite the same as lunch. It is also known to have a small coffee break with a small pastry (pulla), often a cinnamon bun or some small pulla bread.

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

The rent for my room was way lower than the rent for my place in Wageningen. I think my room was about 12 m<sup>2</sup> and I paid around 290 including furniture, water, lights etc. In Wageningen I pay around 490 for 16 m<sup>2</sup> (which already is quite expensive for Wageningen).

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

Although I mostly travelled in Jyväskylä by bike, which I rented for 70 euros excl. fee (30 euros) for the whole semester, public transport can be quite cheap if you get a student membership. I am not sure what the costs are since I did not get one, but it is cheaper to buy one for a month than buy loose tickets!

## 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 want to do a small trip I would recommend checking out all the national parks throughout the different seasons, it is probably most easy to reach these by car. From soihtu Kortepohja you can rent an electric car, but you have to check out the electrical charging points in advance!!

For trips closer to Jyväskylä I would say, check out the skiing hill, during summer you can hike here or climb in the forest. During winter you can ski or snowboard here which is also really fun. You can walk here or take the bike/bus.

Other cities? Check out Helsinki, Tampere, Turku or Oulu, these are the biggest cities Finland has to offer and are most accessible by train.

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

Oh, good!, a must-see which is not located in Finland but is really accessible, cheap and fun during all seasons, is Tallinn. The capital city of Estonia and definitely a welcoming surprise for me. You can travel there for a few days by train and ferry!

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

I mostly loved doing active activities such as hiking in the nature, sauna, swimming or going to a cabin just to chill with friends. So I would definitely recommend going to a cabin, nature trail or to do something active like swimming or ice skating outside. And definitely check out fun activities throughout the KIDE app, linked to the student events. Moreover, check out ESN for nice trips!

### **Safe Money tips\***

If you do not want to go overboard spending money or overspending, there are a few simple ways to save some! My tips would be, do not always eat out. You can buy stuff in the supermarket and plan to cook a little more instead of always eating out in some of the (student) restaurants.

Moreover, when going out, you can save A LOT of money by having a pre drink at home instead of buying alcohol when going out, since this is very expensive.

Also, when traveling, try to plan this ahead so you can buy relatively cheaper traveling tickets!

ESN organises a lot of cool trips for students with student discounts!

## **7.Challenges & best moment abroad**

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

A challenge for me was in the beginning when you are still figuring out who are becoming your new friends and finding the best connections. Even though you meet a lot of people, this can be quite overwhelming or a lot. Therefore, you might not be sure what would suit you best. But just let it overcome you and try to listen to your gut feeling, everything will sort itself out, I'm sure!

### **What was your best memory abroad?**

My best memory eventually was more a general memory of having fun with the people I met and my new friend group that became really close to me. I think it was not really the big thing but just those small moments of making fun and sharing those experiences. Of

course some highlights were, a trip to Tallinn and Lapland and seeing the Northern Lights!

### 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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