



WUR Goes Abroad

1. Student Information

Field of study in Wageningen	Landscape Architecture and Planning
Study period exchange (dd/mm/yyyy)	August 2022 until December 2022
Country (exchange)	Norway
City (exchange)	Ås
University (exchange)	NMBU
Faculty (exchange)	Faculty of Landscape and Society

2. Motivation for exchange

Why did you choose to go on study exchange?

Going on exchange provides a great opportunity to experience how it is to live in another country and to get to know that country. In addition, as exchange student you meet a lot of people with different nationalities in a short time, which is really interesting. Furthermore, each university has its own culture. It is nice to experience the culture of other universities and discover new perspectives, especially outside a Dutch context.

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

I really wanted to go to a Scandinavian country, because the Scandinavian culture always interested me and this was a perfect opportunity to experience the 'Scandinavian way of living' myself. Based on the list of partner universities I selected all universities in the Nordic countries I could go to. I then did some research into the courses that were available for me and whether I liked the location. I decided to drop the destinations with an unlikely change of admittance, because I wanted to go to a destination of my preference. In the end I was in doubt of putting Linköping in Sweden or Ås in Norway as my number 1 destination. In the end I chose for Ås, because I had never been in Norway and people who had been there had good experiences. Also, the NMBU and WUR are very similar and therefore have good communication with each other and almost unlimited exchange places available. In hindsight, another advantage of Ås was that it is very close to Oslo (only 20 minutes by train), which made it a lot easier to travel through Norway with public transport.

3. Accessibility to reach destination

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

I travelled to Norway by ferry from Groningen to Kristiansand. This is a night ferry; you leave Groningen in the afternoon and arrive in Kristiansand at around 10.00 the next morning. (At that time) the ferry was not much more expensive than flying and you can apply for a €50 green traveling Erasmus subsidy. The ferry itself was very nice and you can take unlimited luggage with you. From Kristiansand I took the VY bus to Oslo and then to Ås. The bus to Oslo is a comfortable long-distance bus and only makes a few stops. There actually also goes a train from Kristiansand to Oslo and a lot of trains from Oslo to Ås. The NMBU will provide you with detailed information how to travel from Oslo to Ås.

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	APL380 – Environmental Governance for Planning	10	This course discusses environmental governance theories, environmental problems and connects this to planning.	3	The topics of the course were interesting, but the lectures were a bit messy sometimes, with no clear topic. The examination includes making a podcast, which was quite fun to do.
2	APL230 – Planning Theory	10	In this course several planning theories are discussed from the beginning of planning to contemporary planning problems.	4	This course will be given by a new lecturer next year so the programme might change a bit.
3	EDS285 – Global Food Systems and Food Security	10	An introduction course into how global food systems work and what problems are related to food systems and food security.	4	This is a nice introduction course if you do not know much about how world food systems work.
4	GLA303 – Landscape In a Globalised World	10	This course is about the role of landscapes in an environmental, social and urbanisation context.	4	This is a landscape architecture course but only theoretical and definitely also suitable for planners. The course is a continuation of a previous course, and therefore starts halfway through the semester. You do not have to follow the first course.
5					
6					

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

I had lectures for all four courses and all courses included group work and presentations. The work load is lower than in Wageningen, even with four courses I had a pretty empty schedule. All examination was done through writing essays, and some courses had a few assignments during the semester. The academic level is a bit lower in the way that teachers expect less from you than in Wageningen, but in general quality is totally fine.

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?)

I would say that the culture at the university is quite the same as in Wageningen. The lecturers are approachable in an informal way and are always willing to help. Norwegian students can be a bit shy in class, but in my experience this depended per course.

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

There is a modern sports centre available, but it is expensive. A three-month subscription costs about 90 euros. There are a few restaurants in Ås and some food is available at the campus, but don't expect too much of it. Apart from language courses the university doesn't organise events for international students anymore after the introduction, but there is an active student community and especially if you join ESN there is enough for you to do.

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?)

Housing for exchange students is provided by Siøs (kind of the Idealis of Ås). As soon as you have a NMBU-application number you can apply for housing. Do this as soon as possible, because from the 1st of May Norwegian students can apply too. Most international students will be placed in the buildings of Pentagon I. These buildings are a bit outdated, but totally fine and I believe all rooms are furnished. They are also walking distance from the campus. The Pentagon I rooms are the cheapest (4145NOK ± €415,-). I lived with three Norwegians and two Germans. You can also search for a room through Facebook, but this is mostly for Norwegians.

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

Norwegian culture is very similar to the Dutch culture. Norwegians are direct people, they love coffee and have bread for lunch. Norwegians love going outside and will keep doing outdoor activities as long as possible. The biggest difference is that Norwegians are quite on their own, it is harder to make contact with them. In Norwegian society it is important to not bother each other, so if you seem busy, they won't make contact. However, once you get to know them they are really friendly people!

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

The cheapest room you can rent is about 415 euros per month. Living in Norway is expensive. Many groceries are more expensive than in the Netherlands. Alcohol is very expensive, prices can easily be three times as high as in the Netherlands. Eating in restaurants also costs a lot of money.

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

Public transport in Norway in and around the larger cities is usually good. Long distance train rides are comfortable and dependable. Except the trains, public transport in the Oslo region (including Ås) is operated by Ruter. You need to buy tickets in the Ruter app, so make sure to have a credit card! Each region has its own public transport company and for each you need a separate ticket app and often a separate app to plan your journey too. In some cities you get a student discount, so make sure to check that. Public transport is not really expensive but also not cheap. A ticket to Oslo will cost you about €6,40.

6. Free time

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

Ås is very close to Oslo, so you should definitely go to Oslo. You have a great view over the city at the viewpoint at Ekebergparken. I would recommend to follow the river Akerselva in Oslo, which guides you into some nice, less-touristic parts. Grünerløkka is popular neighbourhood in Oslo and worth a visit. Drøbak is a nice village close to Ås where you can swim in the Oslofjord. Train connections from Oslo are great and you can visit Bergen, Stavanger, Trondheim and even Stockholm relatively easy. Especially Trondheim is perfect for a weekend.

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

I really enjoyed going to the forests around Ås in the weekends. You can access the forest almost directly from campus. There are many long and short biking and hiking routes around Ås. You can also take the bus to nearby forests, or the Oslofjord.

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

If you want to go out in Ås you go to Samfunnet, you can become a member for free as international student. If you have the opportunity to travel, do it, Norway is a beautiful country!

7.Challenges & best moment abroad

What was a challenge you have experienced?

I did not bring a credit card, which is really inconvenient for online payments, such as public transport tickets or tickets for going out. You can ask people to pay for you, but it is more convenient to bring your own credit card.

What was your best memory abroad?

The travelling. I can't pick a specific one though.

8. Contact details (optional)

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