



# WUR Goes Abroad

## 1. Student Information

<b>Field of study in Wageningen</b>	Soil, Water, Atmosphere
<b>Study period exchange (dd/mm/yyyy)</b>	03-01-2022 until 15-06-2022
<b>Country (exchange)</b>	Norway
<b>City (exchange)</b>	Sogndal
<b>University (exchange)</b>	Western Norway University of Applied Sciences
<b>Faculty (exchange)</b>	Faculty of Engineering and Science (FIN)

## 2. Motivation for exchange

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

I have wanted to go on exchange since before I went to university. I love travelling and I have always wanted to experience a different culture and get to know different people. However, mostly, I wanted to experience different nature. I love mountains so much and I miss them a bit in the Netherlands, so it was great to experience them abroad.

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

I actually wanted to do the outdoor education and Nordic Friluftsliv minor and the best university for that was in Sogndal Norway, but there was a mistake on the website that is why I could not do it. However, I could have chosen another university, but the nature around Sogndal was so unique and so present that I still wanted to go there. The country Norway always attracted me because of it's nature and pureness!

## 3. Accessibility to reach destination

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

There are multiple options. I choose to go by plane to Bergen, stayed there for a few days because Bergen is super pretty and then go by bus to Sogndal. You can also go by boat to Sogndal from Bergen. Another option is to fly directly to Sogndal with a transfer in Oslo but that is quite expensive and also you have a very short transfer period in Oslo and you need to go through security again. Another option is to fly to Oslo and go by bus to Sogndal. The bus and boat trips are super pretty both from Bergen or Oslo so I definitely recommend them. Ofcourse going be boat is also super fun but better for the way back I think.

## 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	Climate Change	10	Learn from past and present climate to estimate future climate	2	It was a nice course learned some new things, but there was quite some overlap with my study and only 6 contact hours a week and no excursions, so I am medium enthusiastic about it.
2	Snow science and avalanches	10	Learn about weak layers in snowpack and how they form to prevent deaths and big damage in avalanches and also the characteristics of an avalanche	4	This was a really nice course! A bit challenging but that was really nice! Especially I am very happy about the teacher, he was extremely good at explaining and just a very good teacher. I think everything I learned I will not easily forget! Also, the excursions were awesome!
3	Natural hazards	10	Learn about all the natural hazards around Norway mostly. Landslides, rockfall, avalanches, forest fires, droughts, coastal erosion, etc.	3	The teachers were really nice, the excursions were really really nice and the subjects were super interesting. However, the way the subjects were taught was not that good. A lot of examples and not so much significant information. That was a pity. Mostly, in the guest lectures there was a lack of useful information.
4					
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**How is the study formalized? (E.g. study forms, academic level, examination, workload, lesson material)**

The work load was okay-ish, however the academic level was quite low but I already knew that before I went. That was also not the reason to go for me. I went for the culture, nature and experience.

**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 teachers are really approachable and extreme kind and helpful! We had some fun drinks together and there was always time to ask questions. I think the cliff between exchange students and local students is really big! We have our own courses and there is one English Master and the rest is

Norwegian. There is not that much mingling, but that is also a bit of the Norwegian culture. They do not really like to talk English that much so it is harder to make a connection, so maybe throughout the university they could do a bit more about it?

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

They have a really good canteen with a lot of healthy products! Also, their sports facilities are beyond awesome! Especially the climbing and bouldering facilities. Laundry is fine, just a bit expensive but in Norway.

## 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 just get an email from Samman and that is the student housing in Sogndal. You can live in private housing but as a half-year exchange student you cannot do that if you have a contract with Samman as well. The rental rates are a bit higher than Wageningen but not extremely (350-400 euros). They are suuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuper strict in cleaning! Every week there is a check-up and it is really strict so that is a bit scary but if you do it okay that it is fine.

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

The culture is really different, but you learn to love it. They always respect each other's space and time, so that are quite shy and introvert except when they are drunk then you are best friends haha. They won't necessarily take the first step but once you are in, you are in. I am quite extravert and had no hard time making every first move so that quite worked out haha. They also respect rules much more than Dutch people. When we see a rule we first think: does this make sense to me and if not we just don't do it, but Norwegians have respect for the rules and (mostly) follow them. I can talk about this for hours but I think these are the main points.

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

Ehmmm I think my room was around 385 euros and I think because eating together is not really a thing there you pay 20-30 euros food per two days so that is quite a lot. Alcohol is super expensive! Like half a liter beer for 2.50 euros and at the student house it is 5.80 per 0.4 liter. (Also important for other students 😊)

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

Sogndal is quite small you can walk everything. However, public transport is really expensive in Norway! Like to go to Bergen (160 km) it is 54 euros one way. And it takes forever to go by bus and they also do not go that often, so that really makes you appreciate the Dutch public transport infrastructure haha.

## 6. Free time

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

There is a glacier museum in Flæra which is really nice go by car or there is a bus! Also in Fjæra there are two glaciers you can see from the road. Furthermore, there are four mountains around Sogndal and they are beautiful to hike, all of them. Also, the Sognefjellet is the highest mountain pass from Europe and that's really cool! Go by car and not during winter then it is closed. The west coast is breathtakingly beautiful so perfect for a roadtrip. Also, Jotunheimen is really pretty and super green especially the south part. Go skiing at Hovde, it is cool 😊 and surfing at Hovde.

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

I never looked into a travel guide so I have no idea.

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

Haha everything is expensive but Vagabond is nice to eat burgers. Furthermore, it is a very small city so not that much to do. I recommend becoming a volunteer at Meieriet (student house) if you want to mingle with the Norwegians, they are super kind and very open. Also, if you like outdoor sports become a member from Lurke and Sjøpretten.

## 7. Challenges & best moment abroad

### What was a challenge you have experienced?

Because the level of education was not that high, and I was not busy 24/7 like I am in Wageningen I had a lot of time to think and sometimes felt really lonely especially during the winter months because it is dark super early and everybody is a bit closed off. Also, I was used to eating together with friends/roomies like every day but that is not a thing in Norway and sometimes that was hard. It took me quite some time to build friendships with the Norwegians and in the beginning, I didn't really fit in the exchange group as well. But that all changed in spring and there was a lot to do, and I made great friends and it was awesome.

### What was your best memory abroad?

I think my roadtrip with my dear friend Jana. We had so much fun and met so many new people everything was an adventure with her. Also, just all the parties and trips and hikes and nature and mostly the friends I made! I feel so thankful for this experience and I learned so much it was great! I want to go back every day and I will!

I am so sorry I didn't check for grammar or spelling mistakes so it can be a bit messy!

## 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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