



WUR Goes Abroad

1. Student Information

Field of study in Wageningen	Biology
Study period exchange (dd/mm/yyyy)	03/01/2023 until 20/06/2023
Country (exchange)	Norway
City (exchange)	Bergen
University (exchange)	University of Bergen
Faculty (exchange)	Mathematics and natural sciences

2. Motivation for exchange

Why did you choose to go on study exchange?

I did not plan to go on exchange, but after hearing stories of friends and roommates I started to realise that this really is a once in a lifetime opportunity to know what it's like to study abroad and get to know people from all around the world

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

I did not really have a specific country in mind that I really wanted to go to beforehand, but I had never been to Norway and thought the west coast would be perfect to have beautiful nature, fjords and outdoor opportunities right around the corner. I picked Bergen because it offered the most fun courses and because it felt like the perfect combination of a pretty big city that wasn't too busy at all.

3. Accessibility to reach destination

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

I went by plane, which is only 1.5 hours if you take a direct flight. I personally had an overlay in Copenhagen first to save money. I also know people who went with a combination of bus and train, which is probably equally expensive, but of course more green. It will take around 30 hours to get to Bergen though.

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	Geobiology and evolution of life on Earth	10	The course looks at how life on Earth formed billions of years ago and how it evolved looking at it from a geological point of view	5	This course was a Master/PhD course and even though I had never had anything geology related, I was still able to follow along quite well. You are graded by different tasks, like presentations, some programming and a poster presentation. If you show up during the 6 contact hours per week this course has, you will not have to do any work outside of those hours.
2	Short introductory course in Norwegian language	7.5	This course teaches you the basics of Norwegian language and gets you to around A2. It also talks about Norwegian culture which is really nice	5	I would highly recommend anyone who goes to the university of Bergen, or anywhere else in Norway, to follow a Norwegian language course. It is a really nice way to get to know fellow exchange students and learning the language of the country your in also adds to your exchange. For Dutch speakers, it is also quite easy to learn
3	Marine community ecology and conservation	10	This course looks at different ecosystems and the ecology and life history of different marine species. It also talks about the impact humans have on these systems and species	4	I was not able to attend many lectures and practicals of this course due to overlap, but by just reading the book you can prepare yourself enough for the oral exam. You also have to write a report on pretty much any topic that interests you, which was really interesting
4					
5					
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How is the study formalized? (E.g. study forms, academic level, examination, workload, lesson material)

The level of education was around the same level of WuR, but the amount of contact hours and workload were way less, so overall it was way easier than in Wageningen. This means that you have a lot of free time and, depending on your courses, you could also have free days during the week. Examination is a mix of presentations, papers and oral exams. For Norwegian intro and marine community ecology I had to buy a book.

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?)

Culture in Norwegian universities is very similar to that in the Netherlands. The courses I took had very small classes, so teachers knew your name after the first week and were very approachable. It is also not formal and teachers want you to call them by their first name.

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

For around 120 euros you could get sport rights, which meant you could go to all the Sammen gyms (Sammen is the student welfare organisation). This got you access to the pool and all the massive and well equipped gyms that are scattered around the city, as well as a climbing and bouldering hall and group lessons.

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?)

Sammen, also responsible for the student housing, allows international students to sign up for a room and they will be obliged to give you a room. Most international students live at Fantoft and some in the city centre, but I would highly recommend to try to get a room at Fantoft, because it is basically one big international student village. I did have to share my room with someone else, which, for me personally, was no issue at all, but you should keep this in mind. The rent was, depending on the currency exchange rate between 300 and 320 euros, so for me cheaper than Wageningen.

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

In a lot of ways, Norwegian and Dutch culture are pretty similar. The biggest difference is the fact that Norwegians are very reserved and can be pretty hard to get in contact with. If you initiate conversation or especially when they're drunk, they are really nice people. There is also a really strong outdoor culture, so you will see a lot of Norwegians go on hikes or ski trips during the weekends and holidays.

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

Norway can be really expensive or pretty ok, depending on what you spend your money on. Some groceries are priced the same as back home, but fresh fruit and vegetables are (more than) double of what they are back home. Alcohol is also really expensive, so I did not go out as often as I would have in Wageningen. Half a litre of beer in the supermarket is 2.5 euro and when going out you pay 10 for 0.4L. Rent is cheaper though and I would really not skip out on any activities to save money on my exchange.

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

I got a 180 day ticket for the tram and all busses in Bergen, which was a little under 200 euros. The tram line stopped right next to Fantoft and bring you to the city centre and university in less than 20 minutes. I highly recommend to get this ticket as you will use it multiple times every day. Taxis should obviously be avoided. I had to take one from the airport because I arrived late at night and that will cost you 50 euros for a 20 minute ride. If you want to take internal flights to for example Tromsø, SAS has nice student discounts.

6. Free time

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

Bergen is build around 7 mountains, so I would definitely hike to all of these to get a good view of the city. To get to places like Preikestolen, Trolltunga, Stavanger and Gjeragbolten, I recommend you get a car on Get Around. This is not expensive if you go with 4 or 5 people.

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

Doing cabin tours is one of the most fun and most Norwegian ways to travel around. You should become a member of DNT (only 30 euros) and this will allow you to rent cabins all over Norway for around 15 euros per night (for the unmanned cabins). They can be quite primitive, but that really adds to the experience and doing these multi day hikes from cabin to cabin is great. BSI Friluft is also a great organisation to sign up for, because they organise outdoor trips, like skiing, hiking, climbing and much more.

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

Exploring Bergen is nice, because it's a very beautiful and 'cozy' city, but I recommend to go outdoors as much as possible. Going hiking, kayaking, climbing and skiing is all right around the corner. Voss is a ski resort which is 80 minutes by train and for me was really nice to learn how to ski, especially if you bring your flatmates to teach you. You can get free or very cheap outdoor equipment at BUA and a day pass or even season pass are not that expensive, so this really is a good and cheap place to learn to ski. If you want to do a lot of wintersports, I would recommend to go the second semester, because the ski season is from November till April. I would recommend this semester anyways, because the weather is better and the days only get longer once you arrive.

7.Challenges & best moment abroad

What was a challenge you have experienced?

There really were no real challenges during my exchange, The only thing that really sucked was saying goodbye to all my friends.

What was your best memory abroad?

Almost every trip I took with my new friends was a great adventure and memory, but the best memory has to be either the husky sledding or the Northern light. Both in Tromsø, where I really recommend you go.

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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