



# WUR Goes Abroad

## 1. Student Information

<b>Field of study in Wageningen</b>	Economics and Governance
<b>Study period exchange (dd/mm/yyyy)</b>	11/01/2023 until 31/05/2023
<b>Country (exchange)</b>	Finland
<b>City (exchange)</b>	Helsinki
<b>University (exchange)</b>	University of Helsinki
<b>Faculty (exchange)</b>	Agriculture & Forestry

## 2. Motivation for exchange

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

I really wanted to broaden my knowledge and wanted to experience how studying at another university and in another country is. I wanted to see new cultures and meet people from all over the world, while following new and interesting courses.

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

I always wanted to visit the Nordic countries, since I had never been there before. I also wanted to live in a capital city, since I grew up in a little village and Wageningen of course is not a really big city either. The courses in Helsinki are really focused on sustainability, something I wanted to broaden my knowledge in, so it all came together really well.

## 3. Accessibility to reach destination

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

I flew to Helsinki, but it is not really necessary. On the way back, I will take the trains and the boat. You can go with the train to Hamburg, then to Copenhagen, from Copenhagen to Stockholm and then with the boat to Helsinki. It will take you over a day, but it is a really nice journey to make and people were very positive about it. On the other hand, I chose not to since I believe it would have given me loads of stress before even arriving to Helsinki, which was something I wanted to prevent. But on the way back I would definitely recommend it!

## 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 and Energy	5	It was about the economics of oil, electricity and other natural resources	4	It was a really interesting course and I have learned a lot about oil pricing.
2	Social Sustainable Development	5	It was about the Sustainable Development Goals and mechanisms of how to analyse them.	3	It was a nice course, but it was very short and the difficulty level was not that high. It was the first course the teacher ever taught and that was noticeable.
3	Theories of Sustainability	5	It was about looking at sustainability from different social theoretical perspectives.	5	This was a very interesting course, I loved learning about all the theories and the teacher did really well.
4	Sustainable Entrepreneurship	5	It was about sustainability from an entrepreneurial perspective, so how to innovate and invest in a sustainable way	5	I also really loved this course, it was interesting to learn about sustainable innovation and the prerequisites this has.
5	Organizational Communication in the Digital Age	5	It was about different forms of communicating on social media and the internet in general.	4	It was an interesting course and it was very up to date, I did not really have a background in media but this was good to follow.
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### How is the study formalized? (E.g. study forms, academic level, examination, workload, lesson material)

The lectures are quite comparable with the lectures at the WUR, which was really nice. The academic level was maybe a tiny bit lower, but I had the feeling this was also because we did not really have exams, but mostly essays and learning diaries, so I did not have to remember it all for an exam which was nice. For examination, we had to write mostly essays and learning diaries, and do some presentations. Learning diaries are basically a diary where you write down what you have learned in the course and how you can see the principles in your daily life, or how to connect the main points to things you already knew before the course. The workload was fine as well, comparable with the WUR, maybe a little less. Lesson material was mostly scientific papers, so I did not have to get any books, which was nice as well.

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 lecturers are very nice and they were easily approachable, they always wanted to answer questions. The local students were nice as well. Finns are not really extrovert, but if you had to do a group assignment they would always include the exchange students as well. There were not really big differences with the WUR, since the courses I followed were small as well, which is comparable to my bachelors.

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

At almost all locations, there is a 'Unicafé': a place where you can eat a warm meal for only 2,95. There was one in the city centre open until 7, so I often had dinner there as well. The other ones closed at 14:30. This was an amazing place to meet friends and to save some money on groceries. They also have 'Unisport': a gym prescription was only 100 euros for the entire four months, and you could use 5 locations of gyms and could participate in all of the group classes. They had different dance classes, some steps classes, yoga and many more. I could do laundry at my accommodation for free.

## 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?)**

Everyone I have met here, including me, had found their homes through the university. You can sign up for either HOAS, which has shared housing all over the city, and Unihome, which has one complex of studios. I personally signed up for HOAS but ended up at the Unihome studios, which I found kind of sad but it turned out okay. HOAS is mostly quite close to university, Unihome is a little bit further from the centre but it is close to Viikki campus where my faculty was located, which was nice. So there are some shared rooms and some private rooms, but the shared rooms are more wanted so you have a chance to end up at the private rooms as I did. The rent rates are quite okay: for a shared room, people pay 300-450 or so, for my 25 squared meter private room I paid 600 a month.

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

The culture is quite relaxed, people are quite introvert but once you get to know the locals, they are really nice. It was really dark at the beginning, so when the sun was shining everyone went out which I recommend to do to get some vitamin D. habits and manners are not really that different. Finns do value their privacy, so they will most of the time not appreciate it if you randomly start talking to people on the bus. They can all speak English very well and if you have an actual question or are lost, they will definitely help you find your way.

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

The rent is quite comparable I think, maybe even a little bit cheaper. Most of the groceries are a bit more expensive and eating out is as well, but if you pay attention to where you

go, it is not that big of a difference. For example, fruits are really cheap here (an apple is 12 cents), and halloumi and some other things are cheaper as well. Alcohol is very expensive, but I would recommend going to a trip to Tallinn. Tallinn is a gorgeous city and really worth a visit, and locals bring back a lot of alcohol on the boats, so I would recommend doing the same and grabbing some for back home (long drinks are the way to go!) And unicafé is a nice way to save money, and the Hesburger, a Finnish McDonalds, is really nice as well.

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

The public transport in Helsinki is amazing. It is never late and quite cheap if you have a card. Helsinki is divided into four zones, A B C and D. You will basically get everywhere in the city with an AB prescription, which costs 45 euros per 30 days. If you want to travel a bit further, for example to Nuuksio (a gorgeous national park) or have some trips planned, or you need to go to the airport a few times, I would recommend getting a ABC prescription which costs 59 euros. Every time you go outside AB, you need to pay something around 3 euros, so you can calculate it yourself.

## 6. Free time

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

I personally loved the national parks. There are three quite close doable with public transport: Nuuksio, Sipoonkorpi and Liesjärvi. Porvoo is also worth a visit, it has a really cute old town. I would also recommend Tallinn, which is a gorgeous city as well, and the Turku Archipel. If you go to Turku by car, you can travel back trough Teijo national park, which is also very nice. I would recommend doing some national parks in the winter as well, since the snow makes it very magical. Tallinn is nicer a little more in summer/spring/autumn, since it was kind of quiet in winter. Porvoo is nice in both I would say, and the national parks are still very nice in spring as well.

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

My favourite coffee place is called Johan & Nyström, it has the best coffee in Helsinki to my opinion. Café Regatta is also a really nice place to watch the sunset and to enjoy the cinnamon buns that they make fresh. Helsinki does not have that many sights and you will find everything very easily, so I would also recommend just walking through the city and discovering it on your own: the architecture is very nice and there are a lot of cute cafés and bars. My favourite cocktail bar is Liberty or Death which is very nice, I love the Robert's coffee close to the Ferris wheel, Sompasauna is a local sauna which is an experience and I would recommend looking for a sushi buffet sometime, they are very cheap (under 20 euros). I also love Round, it has vegan donuts and they are really nice.

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

Eating out is quite expensive, so we did not do it very often. What I would recommend are the restaurants in the citycenter mall. There is some kind of food court with a lot of different little restaurants, they are quite cheap and really good. Fat Ramen is also a nice restaurant with multiple locations in the city. Another restaurant I like is pizzeria Via Tribunali. For going out, I would recommend the Irish Pub, a lot of internationals go

there and the beer is only 3,50 on a weekday (so not on Friday). Also, the ESN parties are very fun. Post Bar is also a nice techno club.

## 7.Challenges & best moment abroad

### What was a challenge you have experienced?

Not really, I loved getting to know people, it was so easy since everyone is looking for friends and everyone was so nice. The culture shock was also really okay for me. I would recommend taking vitamin D, the lack of sunlight really exhausted me in the start in combination with the energy you need for small talk and switching to English.

### What was your best memory abroad?

Probably the trip to Lapland, or renting a cabin during Easter break completely off grid, so without running water and electricity. This was really Finnish and I loved this.

## 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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