



WUR Goes Abroad

1. Student Information

Field of study in Wageningen	Environmental Sciences
Study period exchange (dd/mm/yyyy)	01/09/2022 until 14/12/2022
Country (exchange)	Finland
City (exchange)	Kuopio
University (exchange)	University of Eastern Finland
Faculty (exchange)	Faculty of Science and Forestry

2. Motivation for exchange

Why did you choose to go on study exchange?

I saw it as a great opportunity to explore a new country and its culture and way of teaching.

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

I wanted to stay within Europe but still visit a country that differs a lot in landscape and climate from the Netherlands.

3. Accessibility to reach destination

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

The easiest way to get to Kuopio is to first travel to Helsinki by plane. From there you can either take another plane to Kuopio or a train. The train takes about 4 or 5 hours, but you when you arrive you will be close to the city centre of Kuopio. Whereas the airfield is further away and has a worse connection (you will probably have to book a taxi to get into Kuopio).

The way I did is was taking a plane to Helsinki, stay in Helsinki for the night (the connection from the airfield to the city centre is very good) and the next day I took the train to Kuopio. My mentor had already picked up my keys for me and welcomed me at the train station. From there I only needed to walk to the right bus stop and take the bus to my apartment.

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	5	Causes and effects of climate change in general	3	Relatively easy if you're studying Environmental Sciences, however we also had to write a paper so here you could go more into detail.
2	Environmental Health for International Students	5	Risk assessment about some important pollutants	3	The course is meant for international students and includes preparing a presentation about a specific pollutant in duo's.
3	Exposure Assessment	3	Exposure routes and important threshold values	2	I didn't find it as interesting as I hoped, however it was something different from most courses I had at WUR. Also useful for the Risk Assessment course I took.
4	Environmental Risk Assessment	5	Learning how to setup and execute a proper Risk Assessment related to environmental harms.	3	The course consisted of quite some work, not all mandatory though. You get graded for a groupwork paper with useful feedback from a nice teacher.
5	Health Related Environmental Microbiology	4	Microbiology and human health.	2	Mainly self-study with weekly assignments, but again not all mandatory
6	Green Chemistry	3	Learn about the 12 principles of green chemistry and how to implement them	4	Short course with a few lectures and assignments to implement the learned matter in case studies.

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

The study is scheduled a bit chaotically for exchange students, since they don't really work with periods and morning and afternoon courses like at WUR. Also because most courses are not more than 5 credits, I had to take 7 courses in the end. At the start of the semester I only had 1 course for some weeks and near the end I had 7 at the same time, which lead to some stress. However, due to a lot of self-study I was able to schedule it. Also not everything the courses offered was mandatory to pass. The level of the courses felt similar to WUR, however it felt easier to pass for an exam (less strict). Due to more self-study than at WUR, the workload felt a bit much sometimes. The lesson materials were clear and mainly online.

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 lectures were very kind and willing to help. I also felt like most of them really liked it to have internationals in their classes. Contact with local students was a bit more difficult. They were more reserved and with other Fins often. The main difference with WUR is the scheduling of the courses and more self-study and often a presentation instead of an exam.

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

The university offers a very good and cheap lunch everyday (even on Saturdays). With a student card you could get a proper meal for only a couple euros. There were two sports facilities on campus you could make use of for a very low price. However, both facilities were small but still had everything you need. There was also a nice library you could use to study, again also on Saturdays. As far as I know there were no laundry facilities, but these were present at my residence.

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 a couple places in Kuopio with student rooms. Via the university I could sign up to a website and register that I was in need of a room. Shortly after they offered me one and I accepted it. It was a room in a 3-person apartment, with a shared bathroom and kitchen. Male and female was separated and the apartment was located at a complex with about 50 of those. I liked the fact that at this complex mainly other exchange students were placed as well. The rent cost me about 300 euros per month.

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

The cuisine is different from the Netherlands, but still most products you find here were also available in the supermarkets in Finland. The Fins are a bit more quite and reserved but I liked that. Of course they also have different habits, but nothing big in specific.

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

The price is roughly the same, if not a bit cheaper.

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

The get from my home to university I always took the bus. When I arrived in August I also bought a second hand bike, but when it started snowing around the end of October I realised that this might have been a waste of money. Because there started to form a layer of ice on the ground even on most car roads. So transport by bus is recommended because they drive often and it took about 15 minutes to get from my apartment to campus. As student you can get a monthly bus card for about 30 euros. For me this was a great deal since I used the bus daily.

6. Free time

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

In Kuopio itself there are some nice must-sees, like the Puijon tower or visit the sauna "Kuopion Saana". But also natural areas around beautiful. I also went to Koli national park with some others by just renting a car for a day. You can also do this to go on some daytrips to other cities.

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

I don't know if it is in the travel guide but going to an ice hockey game of the local team was really fun.

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

There is a nice street of pubs in the city centre of Kuopio, which you will definitely see during the introduction day. I came here more often during my stay for parties, but also more chill nights with some friends playing pool or darts. I didn't really go to restaurants during my stay, but one restaurant in Kuopio I can recommend is "Ehta". It's in the city centre and I had some really good food there.

7.Challenges & best moment abroad

What was a challenge you have experienced?

A challenge was to fix my courses and learning agreement at the start, because some courses I wanted to follow were not available and others started later than expected.

What was your best memory abroad?

My best memory is the trip to Lapland with ESN KISA (the local ESN student association).

8. Contact details (optional)

Is the reader allowed to contact the writer?	yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no <input type="checkbox"/>
Name/e-mail	Twan Ooink, twan.ooink@wur.nl	