



# WUR Goes Abroad

## 1. Student Information

<b>Study programme WUR</b>	Bachelor Nutrition and Health
<b>Exchange semester (dd/mm/yyyy)</b>	01/09/2023 until 13/12/2023
<b>Exchange destination: University</b>	University of Eastern Finland
<b>Faculty</b>	Department of Public Health
<b>Country</b>	Finland
<b>City</b>	Kuopio

## 2. Motivation for exchange

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

I wanted to experience living abroad and the exchange was the perfect opportunity for that. Also, I have heard so many positive stories from people that went on exchange, that I wanted to discover it myself.

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

In the first place I chose Finland because of the nature. Finland is the country of the thousand lakes, northern light and has a cold climate with snow. I really wanted to experience living in a cold climate. Additionally, the courses that were offered by the University of Eastern Finland matched with my bachelor and interests.

## 3. Accessibility to reach destination

### Do you have any tips to reach your exchange destination?

Kuopio is in the middle of Finland, which means that you have to take a plane, train or bus from Helsinki to reach Kuopio. Flying is faster, but can be really expensive. I recommend going by train or bus. It takes you approximately 5 hours, but it can be really cheap: I managed to get a student ticket for 10 euros. Also, traveling by train or bus can provide you with the beautiful views on the way.

## 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	Introduction to Health Promotion	3	Getting to know the basics of Health Promotion.	1	The content was very theoretical, which makes

					practical implication and use difficult.
2	Foundations of Public Health	5	Getting to know the basics of the field of Public Health.	3	Really useful course if you have never had courses in the field of public health before.
3	Global and Local Public Health Issues	5	Online course about non-communicable, communicable diseases in the world and Finland.	4	Very interesting course since you had to do research about the topics yourself and make posts on a discussion forum.
4	Arts and Health	3	Course about various forms of arts (music, dance, literature, religion, and paintings) and their impact on health.	5	This course gave me an refreshing new insight on another important aspects of health: arts. This course was the most inspiring course I have ever followed.
5	Ethics and Health	2	Course about all aspects of ethics in health research. E.g. ethical committees and laboratory animals.	2	I was already familiar with large parts of the content, because my courses at WUR addressed ethics quite regularly. So, this course was not very challenging for me.
6	Public Health in Humanitarian Crises	5	Course about all aspects a public health worker has to deal with in humanitarian crises. For example how to set up a camp city in a crisis area.	5	This course offered information about all practical aspects of public health, which made the course very interesting. After this course I considered becoming a public health worker myself.
7	Public Health Nutrition	5	Course about all basics of nutrition (macronutrients, micronutrients, lifestyles and diets) and there influence on health and disease.	3	As I already followed nutrition courses for two years, this course was quite repetitive and I did not learn many new things. However, the way of teaching was very interactive, and I have learned to share my knowledge in an understandable way.

### What is it like to study there?

I followed courses of the masters program Public Health. All courses consisted of different kinds of study forms: lectures, tutorials, seminars, excursions, and online self-study modules. Although I am currently in my bachelors, I was able to follow the master courses because the academic level seemed a bit lower to me then at Wageningen university. Although the courses easier content wise, I experienced a higher workload, since there were many writing assignments and self-study was required in order to pass the participation mark of the courses. Whereas the amount of required self-study was higher, the number of contact hours was lower. So, I was able to finish my self-study in time because of less contact hours. I didn't have exams for my courses, instead grades of the courses were based on writing assignments (essays and learning diaries), presentations, and participation during the courses. The lesson materials were

PowerPoints, specific books, recommended papers, and online lecture materials. These lesson materials were clear, easy to use and accessible.

### **What is the culture of the university?**

Although lecturers at WUR are already quite approachable, the lecturers in Finland were even more approachable. The lectures were very interactive which made the content of the lectures more understandable and interesting. I had minimal engagement with local students because I was assigned to a class with only international students and one Finnish student.

### **What does the university offer students additionally?**

The University of Eastern Finland offered lunch in the canteens, which was of very good quality (enough vegetables) and affordable (e.g. 1.80 euros for a vegetarian meal). High quality of the lunch is especially because the government funds universities for offering good lunch. Also the sports facilities were excellent, these were very affordable and all kinds of classes were offered. Laundry facilities were not included by the university, but organized by Kuopas (the student housing, which is recommended by the university).

## **5.Housing-travelling-living**

### **What are the possibilities for housing?**

I signed up for a room offered by the student housing company Kuopas. Kuopas offers rooms in student buildings spread over the city. There was a student building close to campus, but I did not get a room there. Instead, I got a room a bit further away from campus and the city centre, but this place was still very accessible by bus and bike. The rent was lower compared to the average rent in the Netherlands.

### **What is the culture of the country like?**

Although Finnish culture is somehow different from Dutch culture, you can still recognize that Finnish culture has many agreements with other European countries. Finnish people are very punctual, they can be offended when you are late, e.g. 5 minutes. Apologizing and giving a reason for the delay is very important for Finnish people. An important concept in Finnish culture is "sisu", which means perseverance. In general, Finnish people try to live with sisu. Next, sauna is another important aspect of Finnish culture. Sauna is seen as essential for maintaining health. Also, Sauna is the place where Finnish people feel comfortable, which leads to a lot of social interaction, whereas Finnish people in general are very shy and hesitant to talk to strangers. Additionally, Finnish cuisine is quite healthy, which is based on berries, nuts, mushrooms, and fish. A famous Finnish dish is fish-soup.

### **Could you give some information about public transport infrastructure?**

The main way of traveling in Kuopio is by bus. A monthly bus card costs 40 euros. Travelling by bus was very convenient, since the busses drive frequently and are very reliable and save. Since the hilly surroundings and extreme weather, biking is not recommended in autumn and winter. In summer, E-bikes are offered which you can find all across Kuopio and are affordable and accessible via an app. There are special paths for bikers and pedestrians, which makes biking safer. I mainly travelled to university by train, since I lived a bit further away from campus. Taxi's are also available in Kuopio, but quite

expensive, although there is a small discount for students. I only took a taxi when I had to go to the train station very early in the morning, before the busses started.

## 6. Expenses

### **Can you give an indication of your expenses for/during your exchange?**

Ticket there: -  
Visa if applicable: -  
Vaccinations if applicable: -  
Insurances (extra, if applicable): -  
Housing costs per month & type of housing/accommodation: lower  
Groceries: equal  
Public transport: lower  
Restaurant/going out for dinner: higher  
Daytrips/sight-seeing: equal/higher

### **Additional remarks regarding expenses?**

Alcohol is way more expensive compared to the Netherlands.

## 7. Free time

### **What are must-sees in the area?**

*E.g. nearby destinations, how do you prefer to travel, when to plan?*

In Kuopio, there are several must-sees: the Puijotower, the Kuopio Halli, several museums, ice hockey games, ski jump, sauna (Sana sauna!) and of course the nature (endless forests and lakes). Outside Kuopio, a visit to Tampere, Helsinki, and Lapland are recommended.

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

Finland is famous of its lakes and forest, and most Finnish people own a cabin (with sauna) in the woods. I highly recommend renting one of these cabins (offered on e.g. Airbnb), because it is the ultimate Finnish experience.

### **Do you have general tips and tricks about leisure time?**

Going out is an option in Kuopio, since there are various bars in the city centre (e.g. Nousou or Freetime bar). However, alcohol is very expensive in these bars, so I recommend joining ESN, since they sometimes have special arrangements with bars. Mainly I would recommend spending your leisure time in nature, because Finnish forest and lakes are unique.

## 8. Challenges & best moment abroad

### **What challenges did you encounter and how did you overcome them?**

The climate was quite challenging in November and December, since there is limited time of light, almost no sun, and very cold temperatures (-20 degrees). I overcome these

challenges by taking vitamin D, dressing appropriately (many layers), and planning many social activities.

**What is your best memory of your time abroad?**

I went on a road trip to Lofoten (Norway) with four of my friends. Although I only knew them for a couple of weeks, it was the best trip ever. We went on mainly hikes in the beautiful mountains of the Lofoten. This trip was the best memory of my time abroad, since I have gotten a very special friendship with those 4 people.

**9. 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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