



WUR Goes Abroad

1. Student Information

Field of study in Wageningen	Nutrition and Health
Study period exchange (dd/mm/yyyy)	01/09/2023 until 13/12/2023
Country (exchange)	Finland
City (exchange)	Kuopio
University (exchange)	University of Eastern Finland
Faculty (exchange)	Public Health and Clinical Nutrition

2. Motivation for exchange

Why did you choose to go on study exchange?

When we had to decide whether we wanted to go on exchange, which was already in the second year of the bachelor, it just felt like I just started student life in Wageningen due to corona. That is why I didn't choose to go on exchange. However, in my third year of the Bachelor I was ready for a new adventure outside Wageningen and I wanted to meet new people. I chose to extend my bachelor and go on exchange in the fourth year of my bachelor.

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

I really wanted to go to one of the Scandinavian countries, because they offer a lot of health and nutrition-related courses. I chose for Kuopio because they offer a lot of Public Health courses and I wanted to discover whether I like this subject and whether I want to do my master's in Public Health.

3. Accessibility to reach destination

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

There is an airport in Kuopio. However, Kuopio Airport can only be reached from the Netherlands via a transfer at Helsinki Airport. I would recommend flying to Helsinki Airport and then take the train to Kuopio. The train journey takes about 4.5 hours and if you book a train ticket about a month in advance it costs around only 15 euros, which is much cheaper than a plane ticket. Also, the train stops in the center of Kuopio, which is much closer to the student houses than the airport is. Via the website of VR trains ([Welcome on a journey together with us - VR](#)) you can easily book your seat for a train. You don't have to pay for your luggage and you can take a maximum of two pieces of big luggage and a smaller luggage.

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	Foundations of Public Health	5	The course gives an overview of public health as a science and art that aims to promote peoples' and communities' health using organized, social, economic, and cultural means.	4	This course is a requirement for many other courses.
2	Global and Local Public Health Issues	5	The course will strengthen and widen the understanding of several central topics in global health, including, for example, the following: Health in the social context; Maternal and child health as cornerstones of a healthier future; The growing global burden of non-communicable diseases; The volatile and unpredictable infectious diseases.	4	This course is fully online, is fully based on self-study, and has a lot of interaction with other international students via discussion forms.
3	Introduction to Health Promotion	3	During the course, we consider the basis of health and health promotion, including some health promotion approaches, projects, initiatives, the importance of evidence, and ethics in health promotion. Moreover, we discuss some health promotion models, as well as current and future challenges that require a crucial role in health promotion.	4	Nice balance between lectures and individual assignments.
4	Public Health in Humanitarian Crises	5	The objective of this course is to introduce the students to the	5	It's really interesting to learn from real-life examples. A lot of

			humanitarian crisis aspects of various types of disasters. The course will present real-life examples of how public health is compromised in a disaster; how the human rights get violated; who are vulnerable groups; how environment suffers; how is life in chronic conflict situations; what are the mechanisms for psychosocial coping; what are the principles of knowledge management in disaster scenarios; what are the basics of public health preparedness and relief activities.		interaction with the teacher during the lectures.
5	Public Health Nutrition	5	Concepts and definitions in the field of public health nutrition. Diet and risk of chronic diseases (obesity, type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, bone health, cognitive decline). Undernutrition. Determinants of dietary habits, food choice models.	4	A lot of topics are discussed. The topics do not go into much depth due to lack of time.

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

Self-study was an important part of all the courses I followed. I had to do a lot of individual assignments which were mostly written assignments. This really improves your writing on an academic level and in the English language. There was no written exam for any of the subjects. Grades were based on individual assignments and group assignments. For some courses, a presentation determines the grade. Compared to Wageningen, in my opinion, the workload was a lot lower in Kuopio. There were fewer contact hours. However, almost all of the contact hours you have are mandatory, mostly you need to participate in more than 80% of the class to be able to pass the course. There was a lot of self-study, which made it easy to plan your work and to keep free time for doing nice things with friends.

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 culture of the University is very similar to that of the WUR. The lecturers are, like in Wageningen, very approachable and willing to help you. They respond fast via e-mail. There is a lot of space within the university to study in silence. The study places are really comfortable.

During my courses, I did not have a lot of interaction with Finnish students. The Finnish students mostly follow their master's courses in the Finnish language and I followed courses within a master's especially made for international students, taught in the English language. So, there were only international students in my courses and there were no Finnish students at all. However, I heard of some other international students who were in courses with Finnish students so it depends on the department you are in and whether you have interaction with local students or not.

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

I would recommend having lunch at the university. In each building, they serve different menus. You can have a look at the menu online. There is always a vegetarian, a meat, and a soup option. The lunch includes drinks, a head dish, salad, and bread and the prices are between 1,80 euros (for the Vega option) and 2,95 euros (for the meat option). You can decide the portion size yourself. Also, there is a gym at the university. A membership for one semester is only 22 euros. If you also want to follow sport-classes you can buy a membership for only 39 euros and then you can attend sport-classes unlimited.

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?)

It was really easy to get a room in Kuopio. You had to sign up via the student housing company called Kuopas and then they offer you a room via e-mail. You can give preferences like in which of the buildings you would like to live, and whether you want a furnished room or not. I lived in Katiskaniementie (Rauhalahti) and I would really recommend it because those are all furnished rooms and almost all the exchange students live here. It's a bit further from the center, but there is a bus stop near the complex and it only takes 15 minutes by bus to get to the university and 20 minutes to get to the city center. Also, there is a lot of nature next to the complex so that is really nice to go to in your free time. The room costed around 290 euros per month.

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

The Finnish culture is quite similar to the Dutch culture. Finnish people are, like most Dutch people, very punctual and like to be on time. What was different for me was that Finnish people are a bit shy and you always have to start the conversation. They will not come to you to start a conversation. Also, Finnish people eat really early. They have lunch around 11.00 AM and dinner around 4.00-5.00 PM. The cuisine is quite similar to that of the Netherlands. However, except for the university there

are not a lot of vegetarian and vegan options in for example restaurants. Most restaurants have a lot of meat and fish options on their menu.

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

I think Finnish supermarket prices are quite similar to Dutch supermarket prices. Maybe it is a bit more expensive, especially fruit and vegetables. However, some other products like cheese and meat are less expensive compared to the Netherlands. I would recommend you to go to Prisma. This is a really big supermarket, and you will get overwhelmed the first time you go there, but they have some brands (rainbow, extra) that are quite cheap. However, you should take some time to search for cheap food because there is a lot of choice.

In general, eating out is more expensive in Finland compared to the Netherlands. A main course is around 25 to 30 euros and also coffee in a café is quite expensive (around 4.50 euros). There are a lot of services in Finland that are cheaper for students (train, sauna, some restaurants) so always bring your Finnish student card and ask for a discount.

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 infrastructure is pretty good in Kuopio. Most buses drive every 20 minutes during weekdays and on Saturdays and every 40 minutes on Sundays. It is recommended to buy a bus card at the bus office in the city center. For students, you can buy a membership for the bus for only 40 euros per month. With that membership, you can travel unlimited by bus. A single ticket for the bus costs 2.70 euros and a day ticket costs 8.70 euros. It is handy to download the Vilku app on your phone. In this app, you can check the bus schedules and buy single and day tickets. When you bought your bus card at the office, you can easily buy your monthly memberships online (if you have a credit card) on the website waltti.fi. The buses also drive in the evening/night till 2.15 AM, so you can go out and take the latest bus back. Also, during spring and autumn, there are bikes available that you can use to bike for example after going out from the center to home. You can scan the bike with the FreeBike app on your phone and then you can use the bike for only 10 cents per minute. It took me around 25 minutes to bike to the city center and 20 minutes to bike to the university (from the Katiskaniementie student complex).

6. Free time

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

Within Kuopio, I have some recommendations to visit:

- Saana Sauna. This is a SPA for which you pay around 15 euros for two hours and it is really relaxing.
- FreeTime bar. In this bar, you can play a lot of games, such as billiards, darts, and table curling.
- Ozaki sushi. At this place, you can eat unlimited sushi for only 17 euros.

- Puijo tower. At the top of the tower, you can have an amazing view of Kuopio. Also, when there is snow, it is nice to sledge all the way down from the tower to the valley. There is also a big ski jump next to the tower which is nice to visit when there are competitions.
- Ice hockey games of Kalpa. Student tickets cost only 6 euro and the stadium is in the city center.

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

I would recommend you to visit Koli National Park. It is impossible to get there by public transport, but each year ESN, the international student association, organizes a trip to the national park. It takes about two hours to get there by car. It was one of the most beautiful things I saw in my life with a lot of viewpoints, snow, and trees. We had to sweat a lot on our ass because it was quite steep and slippery because of the snow, but we had some much fun.

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

For going out I would recommend you to go to either Nousu or Apteekkari. Also, during the summer Albatrossi is also a really nice club to go out (it is closed during autumn/winter). It is most nice to go out during weekdays because then study associations organize parties in either Nousu or Apteekkari. Tickets cost around 5 euros. It is recommended to download the Kide App. In this app, you can see which events are organized in Kuopio and via this app, you can also buy your tickets for the parties.

It is highly recommended to get a credit card before going on exchange. You will need it a lot for example buying online memberships and buying tickets for parties or trips. Some friends of mine didn't have a credit card and always had to call their parents to use their credit card or ask friends to use their credit card. That is not very handy. As a student, you can get a student credit card. I had one from the Rabobank. With a student credit card, you can spend 1000 euros per month. In my experience, this was enough.

7.Challenges & best moment abroad

What was a challenge you have experienced?

For me, the biggest challenge was at the beginning of my exchange. It took me a lot of energy to make new friends because of the language barrier. At the same time, I missed my family a lot. It can be quite impressive to be in a new place and to adapt quickly to the new environment. Fortunately, your English will get better really fast and then it will take less energy to make social contacts with other students. Also, because Kuopio is not a very big city you will recognize everything easily. Also, there are only around 150-200 exchange students so at the end of your exchange you know almost all of them and it feels like a small village where you always meet people you know.

What was your best memory abroad?

My best memory abroad was the Lapland trip. I went to Lapland with ESN. Almost all exchange students go there so it felt like a big friend trip. Also, the Lapland trip was at the end of my exchange so it was a nice way to end the exchange and say goodbye to everyone. I would recommend joining

the Lapland trip organized by ESN. If you would organize it yourself, it will be more expensive. We now paid around 600 euros for accommodation, activities, food, and transport.

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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