



WUR Goes Abroad

1. Student Information

Study programme WUR	BES
Exchange semester (dd/mm/yyyy)	15-08-2023 until 22-12-2023
Exchange destination: University	NMBU Norwegian University of Life Sciences
Faculty	x
Country	Norway
City	Ås

2. Motivation for exchange

Why did you choose to go on study exchange?

I chose to go on exchange due to the possibility of taking different courses than were available at the WUR. In my minor period at the WUR the minor which I wanted to take was only given in the other half of the year. When I heard of the possibility of going on exchanges this seemed like a great way to still go in the same direction with my minor while also making new exciting experiences.

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

I chose to go to Norway because it is one of the best countries in the world in terms of aquaculture. Therefore, I could both experience a new country which I had never visited and learn a lot about my passions.

3. Accessibility to reach destination

Do you have any tips to reach your exchange destination?

Although it was an option to travel by FlixBus to my destinations, this would be a 2 day journey and for the limited time I had this was not possible for me. I do however recommend looking at trains or FlixBuses if these are more applicable for you.

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	Laboratory Course in International Aquaculture	5	In this course we did various exercises with different systems of aquaculture, such as a general RAS system or Tank hydrodynamics	5	Very hands on, informative and, enjoyable course.
2	Basic Aquaculture Engineering	5	This course followed all technical aspects of aquaculture, specifically ras systems. This varied from different pipes to the water requirements and different hydrodynamics.	4	Although very interesting and informative the classes were slightly boring so I really needed to motivate myself to attend.
3	Fish Physiology and Aquatic Adaptations	5	This course looked into a few interesting cases of fish to explain the overall physiology from the swim bladder to the blood flow.	4	Was a very interesting course.
4	Tropical Rainforest Ecology and Conservation	5	This course explained a variety of things about earths receding rainforests and discussed the dynamics and differences within each of the 5 regions as well as guest lectures which discussed different aspects as well as conservation techniques.	5	This class was amazing and the professor was very passionate and knowledgeable which kept me very intrigued.
5	Ecological Entomology	10	This course consisted of a lot of self study and work finding papers and writing about certain topics	2	I expected to get a more broad understanding of entomology, however this course was mainly reading and citing papers which gave me only a very specific knowledge which isn't very applicable.
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What is it like to study there?

E.g. study forms, academic level, examination, workload, lesson material.

During my period studying there I noticed some key differences between NMBU and Wageningen university. First off the study schedule is very different. Where WUR has the period system with morning and afternoon courses, NMBU has courses spread across the whole semester. I took 5 courses and each had 1-2 lectures in a week, allowing me to have a lot of free time. Some people there planned this to have a longer weekend or minimum work load per day. In terms of work load, I found it to be less intense than in Wageningen, although this really depended on the course and how much self studying you did. I would consider the academic level to be similar to that of Wageningen if not a little lower.

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?

A thing you will often hear from people who have been to Norway is that the people there are closed and hard to get to know, unless drunk. I found this to be relatively true. In my time there I spent most of my time with other international students, however I did manage to make two really good Norwegian friends who I am still in contact with after my exchange. I would highly recommend trying to make those connections. In the classroom lecturers are very approachable and professional in that manner.

What does the university offer students additionally?

There is a sports centre very close to the university/housing offering a variety of sports teams as well as classes, a climbing wall and a good gym. I would highly recommend getting a membership. The housing company which has links to the University also has a student life centre where activities are organized every Thursday and you can go to talk.

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?

For exchange students it was very easy to get a room close to campus. The non-profit housing company linked to the university gives priority to exchange students and the prices are very fair compared to the countries high prices. I believe private rooms are also available but I didn't look into this.

What is the culture of the country like?

The culture in Norway is very different to that in the Netherlands. Where Dutch people can be very direct and open to strangers, this is more unlikely in Norway where people are a lot larger on personal space and I wouldn't say shyness but definitely less direct. One joke I like to tell about this is one I heard about the end of covid; the Norwegians were very happy when the 1.5m distance rule was removed as they could finally go back to keeping 5m distance. When concerning Norwegian food ill be honest to say that I did not really dig deep into it, except for the Norwegian waffles which became a staple breakfast at one point.

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

Public transport is organized in zones. You can buy tickets for these zones on either the ruter or vy apps. It was necessary to link a credit/debit card to pay for these or find a machine at a station. My Dutch debit card didn't work so I had to resort to getting a Revolut account which worked great. The public transport isn't particularly expensive but isn't cheap either. A ticket to Oslo costs around 6 euros and gives you around an hour extra to travel in Oslo. (2 zones and 1.5 hours) Personally I either biked or walked to university, both being very doable with the housing being very close.

6. Expenses

Can you give an indication of your expenses for/during your exchange?
E.g. you can also indicate price differences (higher/lower/equal) in comparison to the Netherlands.

Ticket there: ~150 retour + extra baggage
Visa if applicable: N/A
Vaccinations if applicable: N/A
Insurances (extra, if applicable): None extra
Housing costs per month & type of housing/accommodation: ~360 €/ month
Groceries: Depends how cheap you try to be but I spent maybe 15 € a day on groceries
Public transport: Equal, maybe bit more expensive
Restaurant/going out for dinner: Very Expensive
Daytrips/sight-seeing: Higher but very worth it.

Additional remarks regarding expenses?

Going to Norway you have to accept that everything there will be more expensive and find your own way to deal with that.

7. Free time

What are must-sees in the area?

I would do as much as possible. ESN organises some great trips such as the Lofoten or Lapland trip. I only went on the Lapland one but this was definitely one of my best experiences during my exchange. In general the whole country has gorgeous landscapes so hikes are highly recommended. A car can be rented for reasonable prices so I would also recommend road trips with a larger group to split costs.

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

Not sure. I didn't really use travel guides.

Do you have general tips and tricks about leisure time?

Not really, I spent a lot of time doing sports, hanging out with friends and traveling.

8. Challenges & best moment abroad

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

The largest challenge I had was with homesickness. With this I would recommend talking with your friends who undoubtedly have similar experiences and apparently taking vitamin D pills is essential against the seasonal depression.

What is your best memory of your time abroad?

My best memory was without a doubt the Lapland trip. Going sledding with huskies, feeding reindeers and seeing the Northern lights. 10/10 recommend.

9. Contact details (optional)

Is the reader allowed to contact the writer?	yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no <input type="checkbox"/>
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