



WUR Goes Abroad

1. Student Information

Study programme WUR	BBN
Exchange semester (dd/mm/yyyy)	14/08/2023 until 22/12/2023
Exchange destination: University	Nord University
Faculty	Biosciences and Aquaculture
Country	Norway
City	Bodø

2. Motivation for exchange

Why did you choose to go on study exchange?

Multiple family members have gone abroad to study, and I have heard many positive stories about it. Furthermore, I wanted to experience how it is to study at a different university, and what it is like living in a different country.

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

Scandinavia in general appeared to be a good match for me in terms of climate and nature, for example. I prefer colder weather, and I love mountains as well as water. In Bodø, there are mountains all around, as well as the fjord where the city is located. The Exchange programmes (at the faculty of biosciences and aquaculture in this case) that the university offers also peaked my interest, as they are more about aquatic systems, rather than terrestrial systems which I have already learned about in BBN.

3. Accessibility to reach destination

Do you have any tips to reach your exchange destination?

I went by plane because that is by far the fastest. There is an airport in the city and from there there's buses going. I would have gone by train for the climate's sake, but with my other plans and obligations over the Summer I did not have time to spend multiple days travelling and hauling around all my 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	AK122F Aquaculture	10	Cultivation of salmonids and marine fish. Fish anatomy and physiology. Different aquacultural systems.	3	
2	BI222F Oceanography	10	What drives the ocean. Ocean currents. Ocean surface and interior processes.	3	I spent a lot of time piecing it together myself, because the lectures felt very unorganised
3	BIO2001 Aquatic Microbiology	10	Microbes in aquatic systems, including the ocean, ice and snow and wetland. Microbial evolution and characteristics.	5	Lectures were very engaging and fun.
4					
5					
6					

What is it like to study there?

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

Lectures mostly. For oceanography we went on an excursion on a boat for half a day, which was nice. For aquatic microbiology we had to make presentations on weird microbes, and there were two lab practicals that we also had to write reports about.

The exams are scheduled for 4 or 5 hours, which is longer than the exam takes in my experience. Still, it can easily take 2 to 3 hours depending on the exam and the effort you want to put into it. It's also a lot of material because there are only two semesters in a year, as opposed to 6 at the WUR.

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?

I did not talk much to Norwegian students. It is probably possible, but I ended up speaking with other internationals mostly. Partly because for two courses there were mostly international students. It probably is possible to chat with Norwegians, although it may take them some time to warm up to you.

The lectures and material seemed to be less organized than (most) WUR courses. One lecturer sometimes struggled to properly explain the material and for the exam I spent a lot of time figuring it out myself.

What does the university offer students additionally?

E.g. catering, sports facilities, laundry facilities?

There are quite a lot of things that are organised by ISU (international student union) and peer support. When the weather is still good in August and September, there were a few hikes and beach trips. Also, on Thursdays around midday there are free waffles at Samfunnet. When it started getting colder and darker on Thursday evenings there is sometimes Hygge Thursday or Language Cafe. A lot of activities offer free food.

There are good laundry facilities in the student park. There is a climbing hall and multiple gyms as well, all of which are decently priced. There is also a canteen on campus where you can get a (warm) meal for lunch.

There is a place where students can rent all sorts of outdoor stuff. Only a small 60 NOK fee to sign up, and afterwards everything is free to rent for one week each time. Hiking backpacks, tents and such, as well as winter sport equipment when the snow season begins.

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?

Private rooms as well as rooms with one or more housemates are available. In the student park I think all rooms have a private bathroom, even if the kitchen is shared. There are common rooms for those that live in a studio.

What is the culture of the country like?

E.g. Differences with home, local cuisine, habits, manners?

Not a lot of vegetarian options or very expensive. There is a lot of fish and meat available. People avoid sitting together on the bus. It is more common to greet people when outside, e.g. when hiking than in other situations.

Could you give some information about public transport infrastructure?

E.g. Cost public transport card, taxi prices, how to travel to the university?)

From the student park it is a less than 10 minute walk to campus. From the centre it is possible to go by bus, which takes about 25 minutes or so. A Youth Ticket (18-27 years old) costs 390 NOK, and is valid in all of Nordland. It can be bought in the Reis app. Separate tickets are sold per zone, and cost 44 NOK. They are valid for an hour or so. In the weekend there are considerably fewer buses, especially to more remote locations.

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: 660 euros (plane KLM and Wideroe, SAS would probably be cheaper but they were no longer available on the days I wanted to travel)

Visa if applicable: -

Vaccinations if applicable: -

Insurances (extra, if applicable): -

Housing costs per month & type of housing/accommodation: 550 euros, studio in student park less than 10 minute walk from university

Groceries: 180-200 euros, Higher

Public transport: 35 euros (youth ticket Billett Nordland)

Restaurant/going out for dinner: - (slightly higher than NL I think)

Daytrips/sight-seeing: 90 for Via Ferrata (is a very expensive activity, while hikes are free 😊)

Additional remarks regarding expenses?

Groceries: more expensive than NL but depending on the item in question and manageable if you look out for cheaper items and sales, or for example buy beans and legumes instead of meat replacements (as a vegetarian). I also made my own bread which saved me quite a bit, and I ate oatmeal for breakfast daily which is rather cheap here. Frozen vegetables tend to be cheaper than fresh as well.

7. Free time

What are must-sees in the area?

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

Lofoten: multiple places such as Moskenes and Reinebringen, possible to "wild camp".

Free ferry, frequently in Summer months, afterwards they do not go as often.

Keiservarden and/or 7-toppen hike (in UT app)

Hunstadtoppen, is very close to university

Saltstraumen, go by bus and check time table for when the tide changes

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

The fjord is beautiful and only a 20 minute walk from the student park (blocks), maybe 30 from the university.

Do you have general tips and tricks about leisure time?

E.g. recommendations for restaurants, going out?

I did not go out much, except for going out in nature, but there are parties at Samfunnet and sometimes people organise parties in the student park. The climbing hall is great and there is a large shopping centre City Nord with all sorts of shops.

8. Challenges & best moment abroad

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

It was very dark in November and December, which messed up my sleep schedule. I simply tried to take my vitamin D supplements daily and go outside when it's light out. Hanging out with friends also helps to keep the spirits up, especially because the darker months are also the exam period.

What is your best memory of your time abroad?

Going on long hikes, enjoying the fresh air and northern lights, and one time going backpacking with a group of people.

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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