



WUR Goes Abroad

1. Student Information

Study programme WUR	MEE
Exchange semester (dd/mm/yyyy)	21/08/2023 until 07/12/2023
Exchange destination: University	UNIS
Faculty	AGF
Country	Norway (Svalbard)
City	Longyearbyen

2. Motivation for exchange

Why did you choose to go on study exchange?

I wanted to experience the extremes of the Arctic. The courses that were available there aligned with my interest in meteorology. The oceanography course seemed very useful to develop my skills on that particular topic.

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

The location and courses were extremely interesting.

3. Accessibility to reach destination

Do you have any tips to reach your exchange destination?

Unfortunately a plane is the only real option. What you could do is take the train or flixbus to Oslo (or even Narvik/Tromsø for the real die-hards) and then take a plane from there to minimize your flying time and footprint.

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	AGF-213 Polar meteorology and climate	15	Meteorological processes that are common in the Arctic are discussed and explained. There's also some NWP involved.	5	This course has really cool fieldwork.
2	AGF-214 Polar ocean climate	15	Both general and polar oceanography are discussed. The Arctic ocean and the waters surrounding Antarctica are studied thoroughly.	4	The scientific cruise is the highlight of the course. You sail through Arctic fjords and learn at the same time. The course is a bit chaotic sometimes tho.
3					
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What is it like to study there?

Workload and level are slightly lower than in the Netherlands. There's a lot of groupwork involved. The work is mostly project based, and the amount of lectures is not so high.

What is the culture of the university?

There's a very informal culture leading to good contacts with classmates and staff.

What does the university offer students additionally?

There's quite some options for sports, but of course also just hiking in the surroundings. There's Student Equipment, funded by UNIS, which allows you to borrow useful outdoor equipment for trips and outdoor adventures.

5.Housing-travelling-living

What are the possibilities for housing?

The housing is quite well arranged: the building is new, plenty of space in the rooms, clean, cosy shared kitchens and good laundry facilities.

What is the culture of the country like?

You never wear shoes indoors. Norwegians are a bit shy until you give them a few beers, than they transform completely. There's a very international bubble in Svalbard tho.

Could you give some information about public transport infrastructure?
There is none, only taxi's. But there's only a few roads, and only one road that's not in town, so you can walk everywhere.

6. Expenses

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

Ticket there: 400
Visa if applicable: -
Vaccinations if applicable: -
Insurances (extra, if applicable): 20
Housing costs per month & type of housing/accommodation: 550
Groceries: Way more than in NL
Public transport: None
Restaurant/going out for dinner: Very expensive
Daytrips/sight-seeing: Extremely expensive if you go with a tour, just hike places yourself (with proper (protection) equipment of course).

Additional remarks regarding expenses?

Bring coffee from home, stuff like that is very very expensive.

7. Free time

What are must-sees in the area?

Nordenskioldtoppen Cabin, Student Cabin, Hiortfjellet, Trollsteinen, Ice Caves.

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

Scott Tunersbreen is a very nice glacier.

Do you have general tips and tricks about leisure time?

It's a hiking paradise, make sure to bring good boots because there's no marked trails. Try to hike in groups with experienced people and listen to advice from people who have already spent quite some time in Svalbard.

8. Challenges & best moment abroad

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

The group I was working with for a project did not have adequate meteorological knowledge. I tried to explain most concepts to them, but in the end most of the report was written by myself.

What is your best memory of your time abroad?

We were hiking to the Nordenskioldtoppen cabin on a cold night. The snow was sometimes hip-deep and we were extremely exhausted. We paused on the last ridge

before the peak and laid down in the snow. We looked up and saw Aurora dancing in the skies, all the while the last percentages of my phone's battery provided us with some Dire Straits, magic.

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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