



# WUR Goes Abroad

## 1. Student Information

<b>Field of study in Wageningen</b>	Environmental Sciences
<b>Study period exchange (dd/mm/yyyy)</b>	07/08/2023 until 15/12/2023
<b>Country (exchange)</b>	Norway
<b>City (exchange)</b>	Tromsø
<b>University (exchange)</b>	University of Tromsø / Arctic University
<b>Faculty (exchange)</b>	Geology and Geosciences

## 2. Motivation for exchange

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

I felt the need to change my study environment. I wanted to discover how things were going on in other country to put things into perspective. Moreover, I was excited about getting to know new people and learning a new culture.

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

First of all, I 'restricted' my choice to Europe, because I have the feeling to not know enough about the diversity of Europe yet, so I don't need to go further away of it. Also, the Scandinavian countries and especially Norway are countries I really wanted to discover: their methods of education, their lifestyle, and their culture. From there on, I looked at all the possibilities and the idea of going to Tromsø, completely up to the North was fascinating to me. The nature, the wildlife, the Northern lights, etc., I want to try it out. The university itself offered courses from the geology department and I wanted to see if it was something I wanted to do for my master (I am 3th yr BES).

## 3. Accessibility to reach destination

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

Basically, the only option is by plane (via Oslo/Stockholm/Bergen), the airport is really close to the city center. There are no train stations over there.

## 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	Field Trip Hard Rock Geology	5	1 week bus excursion in and around Tromsø to discover the main geological processes that shaped the rocks that are found in the area. Extensive report to write afterwards to show your understanding.	4	Completely new for me, the teacher was very interesting and explained a lot. I was missing some important background knowledge because I am not a 'real' geologist. The report was quite long to write, and quite a lot of students failed it but there is no exam.
2	Marine Geohazards	5	This is about all the risks that you can find at the seabed. Main subjects: slope failures and tsunamis. This was given in one full week of lectures + exercises to hand in.	4	Very interesting course. The teacher comes once a year from Western Norway to give this course, it's an expert in the subject and you can feel it. Even if it's only a one week course there is quite a lot of content because he gives an entire list of papers/articles to read.
3	Seismology	10	This is the study of earthquakes. The first part of the course is very much physics related, and later on it broadens to other disciplines. Morning lectures, afternoon working on Jupiter notebook to interpret past earthquakes.	3	We were a really small group of students (5) which made it very nice to learn. Asking a lot of questions, discussions etc. The topic was interesting and I feel like I've learned a lot. However, even if the teacher was very nice, his way of lecturing was boring/not entertaining at all.
4	Reconstructing Quaternary marine Climate and Environments	10	This is all about the proxies (methods to rebuild the past climate) i.g. radiocarbon dating, oxygen isotopes, etc. The course includes also lab sessions (+lab report) and a scientific cruise excursion, 2days (+report)	4	The content was very interesting and again something very new for me. The cruise was really an amazing experience and you really understood the point of your work, because the samples gained on board were used later for other research. The course is really worth 10 credits because there is a large amount of work to do. Only negative point, the organisation was a bit messy

					(changing deadlines, changing instructions, etc.) but for the rest very nice.
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**How is the study formalized? (E.g. study forms, academic level, examination, workload, lesson material)**

The ways of teaching vary a lot. You will always have different teaching methods per course. Lectures of course but also exercise sessions, individual reports, group reports, presentations, excursions, I have had them all in 4 courses. The workload varies a lot from time to time. Some courses are given in full week(s), so from 8.30-16.00 everyday you'll be busy, and some weeks you'll barely have to go to university, but might work on a report etc. It is very flexible. But you'll have enough free time, no worries. Also the first semester is quite short (end of August-mid December) so you have free time before and after too. The examination are more based on showing that you really understand: it's often open questions where you have the freedom to develop your answer. Exams are in one period, starts around November, but it varies course per course, so you can still have lectures for one course and an exam for another.

**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 total amount of students in the university is large but they offer almost every faculty, so amount of students/faculty is quite low, especially for the geology department that is small. Each faculty has his own building, so you will get to know all the faces quite quickly. The amount of students/class is very low (10-15 students on average). This makes it very easy to approach the teachers and they are very open to it. However, it is quite difficult to get in contact with the majority of the Norwegian students (there are exceptions) because they often know each other since a long time and speak Norwegian together.

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

The university has a partnership with a company called Samskipnaden (Samskipnaden.no) and they are responsible for housing, catering at the university, sports, etc. You will have to make an account via their website and you'll then get student prices on those facilities.

Quite a surprise when I arrived there is that the cafeterias at the universities are almost all self-service, it is your own responsibility to scan the products you take and pay them, nobody is checking it.

## 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?)**

The housing works via samskipnaden.no, where you need to sign up and give an ranking of your preferred rooms. It is pretty intuitive and well organized. I got my first choice had no problem. To be sure I would still recommend to sign in as soon as you're accepted, but it should be ok. Housing is around 4500-6000NOK/month, which is at the time I'm speaking, something like 400-550 eu/month.

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

I feel like the people over there are quite closed/individual and are difficult to connect with. They will just leave you the freedom to do whatever you want but will not often try to make contact with you. But once you pass that phase and get to know them better, they are very friendly and will be there for you. So, compared to the Netherlands where Dutch people are very talkative to everyone, it is quite different. In terms of food, they don't have that much specialities, and the ones they have a lot meat and fish-based. They all have a very good English so that's often not a problem.

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

Everything is more expensive than in the Netherlands I would say but not crazy more expensive. If you go to the cheap supermarkets, don't eat out too much, etc. expenses should be alright. It also depends a lot on the Eu/NOK conversion, right now the Kroner has lost lots of value so it is cheaper. I would also recommend checking what the % your bank takes on every transaction you're doing in NOK, because it can save you a lot of money at the end.

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

The main transportation method is the bus. A card for a month is 330NOK, so around 30e/month. You can try to get a bike, but from November on, it will be quite difficult to use it (cold/snow). The taxi is crazy expensive so always catch the last bus!

## 6. Free time

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

I would recommend doing lots of the excursions in the summer period (for me august-september). At that time the workload is still quite low and the weather and amount of light is very nice. After that it becomes rainy, cold, and more importantly it gets dark real quick so difficult to visit. In tromso itself there are lots of hikes to do, they are all amazing, try them all (Tromsdalstinden, Kjolen, Rodtinden, Sherpa trappe, etc.). All the Erasmus students will have the same ideas so you can easily make hiking groups 😊 Trips further away that are also amazing are Senja, Lofoten, Sommaroy, you can go by bus or

rent a car with friends for them. I did not try it but I've heard that going to the North Cape (10h drive) is a bit overrated.

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

Try the sauna of PustKafe in the city center ! Also in summer there is a husky café that is quite cute!

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

A very nice thing to know is that the municipality of Tromsø offers leisure material to rent for free if you're registered as a citizen of Tromsø. The system is called Turbo. You will find camping equipment, hiking stuff, winter sports equipment etc.

The restaurants are very expensive but of course you can try them out sometimes. For local food specialties, I recommend going to Eidehandel (in Eidkjosen, one bus away). There you will find a butcher and a fish market to try local fish and reindeer. It is quite expensive but the quality is amazing. They also have a small canteen where you eat their food there at a reasonable price.

## **7.Challenges & best moment abroad**

### **What was a challenge you have experienced?**

I think it is to really connect with the locals. Because with the language barrier and the difference of culture, it is not always easy to really create relationships with the locals.

### **What was your best memory abroad?**

I think the most amazing thing over there is definitely the breath-taking nature! It is incredible to be surrounded by wonderful mountains, and having wild animals just living their life over there (reindeers). Of course you will have the opportunity to see the Northern light which is truly amazing. Also, it is beautiful to see Tromsø with the changing seasons. August you will still really have the summer vibe, then the fall with the nice colours (and rain), and then the snow and the cold from October/November on.

## **8. 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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