



WUR Goes Abroad

1. Student Information

Study programme WUR	Master Molecular life sciences
Exchange semester (dd/mm/yyyy)	14 – 8 – 2023 until 22 – 12 – 2023
Exchange destination: University	NTNU
Faculty	Multiple
Country	Norway
City	Trondheim

2. Motivation for exchange

Why did you choose to go on study exchange?

I heard from a lot of friends that had been that it was absolutely amazing. In my bachelor I didn't go because I had hardly seen anything of Wageningen due to corona, but now I felt like it would be an amazing way to enjoy a country for longer than your typical holiday. Travel once stay longer so to say.

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

I love ice skating in general, and nothing beats skating on natural ice in the amount of joy it brings me. Sadly, there is not too much of that in the Netherlands anymore so I thought I could go on exchange somewhere with more proper winters than in the Netherlands. I looked at places in Europe that would have seasonal freezing, lakes and universities and Trondheim turned out to be the most promising for me, including courses.

3. Accessibility to reach destination

Do you have any tips to reach your exchange destination?

Trondheim has an airport but I did not want to fly for environmental reasons. On my way there I drove with my parents who then spend their vacation in Norway after exploring the city with me. We took the ferry from Kiel to Oslo which was nice.

On the way back I took the train. This would originally have been a 30 h ride with 5 transfers but eventually took 33 h with a pickup in Düsseldorf due to a strike in Germany. Although it sounds really long, I found it a lot more pleasant than a 10 h car drive.

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	Energy Storage 2	7.5	Covers all types of energy storage devices from Li-ion batteries to flywheels. It gave a good understanding of the applications each type is suitable for and what barriers exist for widespread adoption	4	A lot of the content was rehearsal for an MML/BML student
2	Climate Change Mitigation	7.5	Explains climate change, causes, mechanisms and how we can prevent it. Focus mainly on societal change and less on technologies and individual actions	5	Really well constructed course gives good perspective on the importance of different solutions.
3	Hydrometallurgical Process Technology	7.5	Metal production from low grade ores and complex wastes such as batteries. Extraction of specific metals from the source using acidic solutions and how to purify and isolate these.	4	Interesting course but relatively new so still some start up issues, they do put effort in improving.
4	Solar Cells and Photovoltaic Nanostructures	7.5	How solar cells work and are made. Covers the physics of converting light into electricity, mainly in Si cells put also newer technologies are explained.	5	If you want to know how solar cells work this is the course to chose. Well taught.

What is it like to study there?

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

In general quiet similar to Wageningen I would say. 'intermediate level' courses were easy for me as a master student but 'second decree level' courses were very similar. My courses had some practicals but much less than what I have in Wageningen (about two dayparts per course in the whole semester). Due to this I found the workload to be less than Wageningen, there were some assignments every week but those were less work than lab reports and the amount of lectures was also much less than the time I am usually occupied.

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?

Approachability of lecturers and engagement was very similar to WUR. As you generally have 4 courses at the same time and with conflicting schedules I feel like people are generally more relaxed regarding attendance and the number of assignments you get.

What does the university offer students additionally?

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

There is one big sports association called NTNUI that has many subdivisions for different sports. These subdivisions act similarly to associations in Wageningen although they are a bit bigger. Some nice associations:

NTNUI Koiene: builds and maintains basic but cosy log cabins. These can be booked for a small fee and you can hike or cross country ski towards them with your friends every weekend if you want.

NTNUI Tøptur og Frikjørring: back country skiing and freeride association that organises avalanche courses and trips in the spring semester and tough circuit workouts the whole year.

NTNUI Ski og Fjellsport: general outdoor association that organises weekend trips, workouts and social events almost every week. Very open and welcoming to international students and I would highly recommend them. Getting on trips is not easy as they are very popular. So immediate signup is key and joining a committee or having a car will increase your odds of acceptance.

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?

Finding a room was hard for me, a lot of big student housing suppliers only give 1 year contracts. In the end I found something through friends of friends. Sign up on the big housing places the moment you hear from WUR you are accepted and don't wait for the NTNU acceptance as that is almost guaranteed. A lot of people stay at Sit Moholt or Voll, or private housing. You can also look for housing on facebook but in addition to scammer adds you can likely identify, some groups are moderated by scammers. They ask for your email to confirm you are a student but then a fake organization called ISN starts emailing you. ISN sells tickets to fake parties, no party is organized and you pay for a club that has free entrance. ESN is very real, ISU should be real but I haven't seen them, **ISN** is fake. If you are unsure about something: email the NTNU exchange office they are trying to prevent this and would like intel from students but it is an uphill battle.

What is the culture of the country like?

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

Norwegians can be a bit harder to make friends with. They will be friendly but it takes some time before you develop a stronger bond.

A lot is done via Facebook. Norwegians communicate via facebook messenger instead of WhatsApp.

Norwegians are very outdoorsy, cabin trips, hikes and (cross-country) skiing are very popular weekend activities. Children spend more time outside than dutch children and people just dress appropriately if the weather is 'bad'. Norway is a very socially safe country. Harassment and criminality hardly exist and cars always stop for pedestrians, but if you go on a hike somewhere in nature it is very common to only see a hand full of people during the whole day, so help is not as close or quick as in NL: you need to prepare yourself for injuries.

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

Biking is relatively common for foreign standards but much less common than in NL. In winter spiketires are a must on a bike but if you have those it is safer than walking without spikes. Winter biking is for tough people but I enjoyed it a lot. You can do your own maintenance or get help at Sykkelkjøkken where a membership cost only €12 a semester.

Bus infrastructure in the city is very good a student month pass costs €50.

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:

Visa if applicable:

Vaccinations if applicable:

Insurances (extra, if applicable):

Housing costs per month & type of housing/accommodation: I payed 5200 NOK a month or a 10 m² room. I shared a kitchen and bathroom with two others.

Groceries: Some things really expensive but cheap brands are roughly the same as they are here.

Public transport: Month pass €50

Restaurant/going out for dinner:

Daytrips/sight-seeing:

Additional remarks regarding expenses?

7. Free time

What are must-sees in the area?

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

Trollheimen, bymarka but everything is beautiful

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

Ice skating on natural ice. I went for doing it and it was just incomprehensibly amazing. They plow tracks on Theissendammen and Haukvatnet at the edge of town. The bigger lakes are much more interesting but they require proper safety preparations If you like ice skating contact me and I can give more details. Always go with other people and ice picks to drag yourself out if you go through!

Do you have general tips and tricks about leisure time?

E.g. recommendations for restaurants, going out?

The sports associations I mentioned before are really nice. Lofted at moholt is a nice place to chill and play games. I did not go out much but there are clubs in the center.

8. Challenges & best moment abroad

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

I developed a mouse arm (injury due to a lot of computer work) and it took 2 months of emailing and the injury developing from annoying to serious before I got help from anyone. After a lecture where my arm had become quite painful I started bothering helpdesk people and the exchange office until they helped me. In the end I found a physiotherapist that helped me.

What is your best memory of your time abroad?

Hard to say as so many were incredible but either one of two days of ice skating or one of the days with the friends I made being outdoors and having the best deep conversations.

9. Contact details (optional)

Is the reader allowed to contact the writer?	yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no <input type="checkbox"/>
Name/e-mail	Persijn.vandevelden@wur.nl	