



WUR Goes Abroad

1. Student Information

Study programme WUR	MSc Geo-Information Science
Exchange semester (dd/mm/yyyy)	14/08/2023 until 13/12/2023
Exchange destination: University	University of Oslo
Faculty	Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences
Country	Norway
City	Oslo

2. Motivation for exchange

Why did you choose to go on study exchange?

The main reason I chose to go on a study exchange was to experience living abroad in a different country, where I did not speak the same language and culture as the people around me. After studying for >5 years in international environments, I wanted to see the different side of the coin as an international.

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

I mainly chose the UiO for two reasons: firstly, they offered the most interesting courses out of the selection available for MGI students. Most of the partnered universities for MGI were mainly focussed on agriculture, or more suitable for MEE students. And secondly, I knew Norway offered great nature and is what I wanted to see more of.

3. Accessibility to reach destination

Do you have any tips to reach your exchange destination?

By far the easiest option from the Netherlands is to take the plane to Oslo Gardermoen, never fly to Torp Sandefjord. From there you can take a public train from Vy using the Ruter app (cheaper) or the Flytoget which is faster, but more expensive.

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	Remote Sensing of the Earth Surface	10	Introduction course to remote sensing of the earth surface (e.g., glaciers, vegetation monitoring)	4	Compared to remote sensing taught at WUR, this course gave a deeper understanding of fundamentals (especially in satellite orbits, and sensors). But WUR gives more practical experience in using remote sensing data
2	Remote Sensing of the Atmosphere	10	Introduction course to remote sensing of the atmosphere (e.g., aerosols, cloud types, air quality)	5	Very interesting course in a field often disregarded by MGI students. This course was taught for the first time, so still had some problems (i.e., shared with bachelors but programming was too high level without decent experience) but the professor was really good
3	Advanced Remote Sensing and Topographic Analysis	10	Advanced course on remote sensing split in two parts: first part focussed on topography/image matching, second part on thermal remote sensing	5	Both lecturers have a lot of experience (with Andy Kääh also involved in the first course). The lectures on thermal remote sensing are a bit confusing, but I have learned a lot on the topic. It was a more difficult course compared to the other two, but that is to be expected
4					
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What is it like to study there?

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

Studying at UiO was a great experience, all the professors I had were very experienced and knew all the material at a high level. In general, the way courses are given is similar to that of in Wageningen but the total work load is significantly less than that in the Netherlands. At least, compared to the course I followed at MGI. Examination was a combination of practical exercises / research projects and written exams.

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 culture of UiO is extremely similar to the WUR with professors being approachable for questions regarding the lessons. The courses I followed all had relatively small numbers of students attending (approximately 30, 8, and 15 students). What surprised

me is that students are less social compared to the WUR, usually in MGI during breaks everyone heads to the coffee machine and mingles with each other. This is not the case at UiO, but could be course/student dependent. Another interesting culture difference is that Norwegians have high standards for work-life balance so nearly all lessons will be finished at 16:00.

What does the university offer students additionally?

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

Since UiO has more students compared to Wageningen, especially when considering other universities based in Oslo, nearly all facilities desired by students are available. For example, the UiO campus has several libraries, several gyms spread throughout Oslo, and various cafes. I highly recommend Frederikke at UiO campus which offers very cheap and tasty lunches (can be a dinner replacement if you're lazy 😊).

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 UiO guarantees rooms for international students through SIO with furnished and unfurnished rooms. My rent was approximately 470 euros per month and I only had to travel 20-30 minutes to campus using public transportation, or in 10 minutes by cycling downhill. Make sure to sign up on time, and the whole experience will be flawless

What is the culture of the country like?

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

The culture is nearly identical compared to that of the Netherlands, though Norwegians are more polite and less present (e.g., metros will be almost quiet). The stereotype of Scandinavians not being social is incorrect in my opinion, though Norwegians will not talk to you unless they have a strong reason to do so.

Could you give some information about public transport infrastructure?

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

In Oslo the entire public transport system (metros, trams and busses) are all done through Ruter and costs about 50 euros per month as a student. I lived in the student village of Sogn from which I could take a bus (+-15 minutes) or walk down to Ullevål Stadion to take the metro (+15 minutes). In general, everything in the city is easy to reach using Ruter. I also highly recommend buying a subscription to the Oslo city bikes (Oslo Bysykkel) since it can be easier to travel shorter distances, like going to university or from neighbourhoods not well-connected with the T-bane.

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: Higher
Visa if applicable: -
Vaccinations if applicable: -
Insurances (extra, if applicable): -
Housing costs per month & type of housing/accommodation: Higher
Groceries: Higher
Public transport: Lower
Restaurant/going out for dinner: Higher
Daytrips/sight-seeing: Higher

Additional remarks regarding expenses?

Do not drink too much alcohol at bars and buy groceries in Grønland

7. Free time

What are must-sees in the area?

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

Must-see's in the Oslo area:

- Light festival along the Akerselva (*elvelangs*) in September
- I recommend checking out the flea market at Frogner neighbourhood on Saturdays
- Must-see is a combined visit of Grünerløkka and Vulkan (tip: do this on Sunday for a cool market at Ingens gate)
- Go hiking as often as possible in Nordmarka (tip: visit Skjennungstua for a good view with some delicious snacks)
- Recommend to use one of the Fjord saunas. My personal favourite was Salt where you can combine a sauna trip with amazing view of the Opera House with live DJ's and other events

Must-see's in Norway:

- 100% visit Ålesund for the best fjord landscapes in Norway, with typical highlights of the area being the Geirangerfjord and the Sunnmørsalpene.
- Hike up the Gaustatoppen being the highest mountain in southern Norway and enjoy pancakes or waffles at the top
- Try to rent a car (or find someone who owns one 😊) and drive to the mountains west of Oslo near Rjukan. I visited Norefjell which is a relatively easy hike with amazing views

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

In the Oslo area, my number one tip would be to visit the Kongens Utsikt ('Kings View') west of the city. You can take a bus there which takes about an hour, and according to locals this has the best sights in the entire Oslo area.

Do you have general tips and tricks about leisure time?

E.g. recommendations for restaurants, going out?

You are in Norway, so my definitely go hiking as often as possible. Through bua you can also rent free gear such as tents and go wildcamping. I personally cannot ski but that is what a lot of friends did as well. For bars I recommend: Blå (go here on Sunday at 16:00

for a live jazz concert), Radio Løkka (3 beers for 190kr in happy hour) or Rebell (also has happy hour deals, and is a nice combination of dancing and chill bar).

8. Challenges & best moment abroad

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

Biggest challenge is the extremely high prices for living needs as nearly everything will be more expensive than in the Netherlands, especially fresh produce. The best way to overcome this issue is to do your groceries in the Grønland neighbourhood where prices are more comparable. In addition, in the first weeks of your semester, make sure to make friends with other internationals as it is relatively difficult to meet new friends once groups have been established.

What is your best memory of your time abroad?

My best memory of my time in Norway is my 3-day trip to Ålesund with the beautiful views over the Geirangerfjord or solo-climbing the Skopphornet and seeing the views over the entire area.

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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