



WUR Goes Abroad

1. Student information

Study programme WU	BSc Economics & Governance
Exchange semester (dd/mm/yyyy)	08/01/2024 until 31/05/2024
Exchange destination: University	University of Helsinki
Faculty	Agriculture and Forestry
Country	Finland
City	Helsinki

2. Motivation for exchange

a. Why did you choose to go on study exchange?

I wanted to travel and explore more of Europe for a long time and wanted to get more out of my comfort zone and meet new people

b. What is the reason you chose for this country?

I always wanted to go to one of the Scandinavian countries and Finland seemed really interesting, especially the possibility to travel to Lapland and Helsinki seemed like a nice city to live. Also, it was one of the cheapest countries of the Scandinavian.

c. What is the reason you chose for this university?

I chose this university because it is known for its focus on sustainability and social sciences, which were areas I was interested in.

3. Accessibility to reach destination

a. Do you have any advice about reaching your exchange destination?

The cheapest way is to take a train (and then probably a bus), to your destination, but if you have much luggage and have not figured out how the public transport app works, I would suggest an easier (but more expensive) way like taking a Bolt or Uber to your destination.

4. University and studying

a. 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	Agroforestry 1 - Introduction to tropical agroforestry	5	The course aims at teaching about the main topics of agroforestry and how this relates to topics like biodiversity and climate change	3	I liked the course because the topic of agroforestry was interesting, but some of the lectures didn't make sense as in they didn't relate to agroforestry at all and the groupwork assignment was not well explained.
2	Agricultural and rural policy of the European Union	5	The course aims at teaching about the content of the main instruments of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) of the EU and how these developed over time.	4	Learning about the instruments of the CAP was very interesting, with weekly assignments about different topics.
3	Sustainability and global food value chains	5	The course aims at teaching about the content of global food value chains and how these relate to economic and political activities around the world	4	The course was very interesting because I learned about something I had never really heard about, lectures were given in a nice way with interim exams and one final exam.
4	International forest policy	5	The course aims at teaching about different theories and frameworks in the making of international forest policy.	3	The course was interesting, but too interactive for me. The teacher deviated a lot of the subject that was talked about and some of the interactive activities I thought were useless. Still an interesting subject.
5	General Equilibrium Modeling	5	The course aims at teaching about general equilibriums in economic markets and modelling them with Computable	4.5	The course was different than what I expected but in a good way. I learned how general equilibriums in markets can be calculated with models and what the results

			General equilibrium models.		practically meant. Course was given with weekly assignments which were really fun to do.
6	Topics in political economy	5	The course aims at teaching about different voting methods and strategies in political elections and microeconomic behaviours.	3.5	The course was different from what I thought it would be, because it was about voting methods. The level of information was very different, with fairly easy to really difficult topics, but overall the course was alright.

b. I had sufficient possibilities to select suitable courses that were taught in English (Yes, No - Explain):

c. I had sufficient possibilities to select suitable courses in my field of interest (Yes, No - Explain):

But if you want to do courses outside of your faculty you can also do this!

d. I am satisfied with the level of the courses that I followed (Yes, No - Explain):

The level of the courses were good. Not too difficult, but some topics in some courses could have been explained more broadly and some topics can of course be harder if you don't have pre knowledge of them.

e. I am satisfied, in the end, with the selection of courses I followed (Yes, No - Explain):

f. What is it like to study there?

E.g. Study forms, academic level, examination, workload, lesson material?

The intensity of study at the university is different for each course, but overall very clear and easy to maintain. If you just don't procrastinate your work, the workload is very doable. In the weeks to the exams the workload will of course be a bit higher but this is normal. Overall the workload I think is pretty similar as in Wageningen and the academic level is a bit lower.

g. What is the culture of the university?

E.g. How approachable are the lecturers, engagement with local students? What are the differences with WU?

Lectures are pretty approachable, you can ask them or mail them anything. The engagement with students overall is a bit lower, because some of the lecturers are late with posting information about the course or exams online or giving back results of exams later than expected.

h. What does the university offer students additionally?

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

The Catering of the Universities are the best, with very cheap but good meals that you can get at the Unicafé's in every campus building. For sport facilities you can have a subscription on Unisport, for which you pay a fair price of €20 per month to make use of the gym and other activities like yoga, dancing and more. For other sports you can participate in student activities from student associations at another sport centre. Laundry facilities are at every student home and you need to reserve them.

5. Housing-traveling-living

a. What are the possibilities for housing?

E.g. Availability to sign up for a room on campus, private rooms, rent rates?

At first, you can sign up for either one of the housing corporations of the University, they are called Unihome and Hoas. You can get one offer and you need to accept it, otherwise they will not give you another offer anymore. These rooms are around €500 per month, in which you have your own room with your own kitchen and bathroom in a student building in a complex. Myself, I had a cheaper option at a separate student complex specifically for students of the faculty of Agriculture and Forestry, which is kind of like the apartments at Unihome, but you share your kitchen and bathroom with others (I would really recommend this option if you are in the faculty of Agriculture and Forestry).

b. What is the culture like?

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

Finnish people are a bit more introverted than the Dutch, but not less friendly. They will help you with everything and you can have really long conversations with them if you want. There is not really a local cuisine but I would recommend reindeer meat. The party life is not that big in Helsinki but there are some nice clubs to go to! Also ESN has some nice parties and activities.

c. Could you give some information about public transport infrastructure?

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

You can attend public transport with a public transport card you get in the introduction week. This costs €40 per month and you can attend every type of transport with it. If you want to take taxis, DON'T get normal taxis from the street, they are very expensive! Get an Uber or a Bolt instead! Travelling to your university depends on where you live, but public transport is the best option with the bus.

6. Expenses

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

Category	Expenses
Travelling there	€250 (retour ticket)
Visa - if applicable	€0
Vaccinations - if applicable	€0
Insurances (extra) - if applicable	€150-200
Daytrips/sight-seeing	€250-€300 (per month)
Housing costs per month & type of housing/accommodation	€250 (This was for my accommodation; normally around €500)
Grocery costs per month	€250
Public transport costs per month	€40
Restaurant/going out for dinner costs per month	€30

b. The price levels were in general [higher; lower; equal] in comparison to in the Netherlands: Higher

b. Additional remarks regarding expenses?

Don't spend too much on unhealthy products and try to avoid useless expenses (but still have a fun time 😊)

7. Free time

a. What are must-sees in the area?

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

The white cathedral is of course a must see, the bay and the national parks (Nuuksio and Sipoonkorpi) around Helsinki for hiking is really nice. Of course I would really recommend to go to Lapland. Try to do this when your exams are done, it saves a lot of stress. Also go to Tallinn in Estonia and if you have time also visit the other Baltic countries! If you have time in the end to visit Stockholm and/or Oslo I would also recommend this! And of course you need to try the saunas.

b. What does not appear in a travel guide, but is definitely worth seeing/doing?

Icehockey games!

8. Challenges & best moment abroad

a. Any challenges? How did you deal with them?

If you have a problem regarding mental issues (maybe because of your exchange) talk to a friend or family member, it always helps the best.

b. Best memory?

There are many, many beautiful memories I have from my exchange, but if I have to choose one, it is seeing the Northern Lights on a frozen lake in Lapland with my friends.

9. Contact details

Is the reader allowed to contact the writer?	yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no <input type="checkbox"/>
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