



WUR Goes Abroad

1. Student information

Study programme WU	Nutrition and Health
Exchange semester (dd/mm/yyyy)	10-1-2024 until 30-5-2024
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?

To experience a different culture and make international friends. Besides that, to gain more confidence in speaking English and encountering strangers.

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

I always wanted to go to the Nordics because of the nature and also the well-arranged education and spoken English language.

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

Fellow students' positive opinions and courses that lined up with my interests.

3. Accessibility to reach destination

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

Plane, train and ferry are all possible options.

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	Child and family-related issues in a changing society	5	This course introduces multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary perspectives on children and family related questions in a changing society. During the course we examine what kind of approaches and questions different disciplinary fields have on children, family, diversity and on changing societies; what kinds of questions they put in the center of their inquiries and what kind of perspectives	5	Above expectations! A lot of interactions with the teacher, speakers from different fields and a lot of space for personal opinions.

			frame the work of professionals in fields such as social work and education. We learn about the perspectives of sociology, social work, social psychology, education, home economics, childhood studies, media studies and law studies. More precisely, we touch upon the changes of the family structure in Finland and Nordic countries and beyond, multiculturalism and diversity, norm-critical approaches on children and families, children's rights and child protection.		
2	Consumer Behaviour	5	Consumer behaviour offers a sweeping introduction to critical approaches to consumer culture. Drawing from diverse sources of consumer research and contemporary societal critique, the course will explore and problematise core concepts of consumer culture such as individuality, status, choice, authenticity and brand iconicity. The course does not conduct a typical business school approach to consumer behaviour. Instead, it offers a critical view of how we are all immersed in the consumption and production of cultural symbols that construct and perpetuate our entire life worlds.	1	Not what I expected. Way more scientifically than expected and requested a lot of literature reading.
3	Beyond the Belly – on the psychology of eating	2.5	<p>Neurocognitive and psychological aspects of eating</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Effects of food and eating on body & mind - motivational aspects of food reward - addictive eating - eating disorders - the role of personality and mindset <p>Evolution of eating behaviour and food choice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Intuitive eating vs. dietary recommendations in the modern food environment <p>Societal aspects of eating behaviour</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Social, cultural and ethical aspects of eating behaviour and food choice - the role of (social) media - stigma and body image <p>Economics of the food environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consumer research - food marketing - food policy <p>Behavioural change interventions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Therapeutical approaches to target conditions such as eating disorders or obesity 	3	I loved the content, however I think improved in the curriculum regarding presentation skills can improve this course a lot.
4	Molecular nutrition	5	The course is a gamified digicourse that students can study at their own pace. The course includes four topical themes: 1) Nervous system and nutrition, 2) Carbohydrates and gut microbes, 3) Lipids in health and disease, and 4) Non-coding RNA in regulating metabolism. These themes are divided to obligatory and optional levels.	5	Although it was an online course, the way it was set up was really cool. Nevertheless, I also learned a lot from the oral exam discussion in the end.
5	Vitamins and Other Bioactive Substances	5	Upon completion of this course, the student can categorise terms related to vitamins, other bioactive compounds and their health effects. The student can describe the chemical properties,	3	Similar to education ways I am used to from my home university.

			occurrence, and functions of bioactive compounds and illustrate their role in foods. The student is able to assess factors affecting intake and bioavailability of bioactive compounds and evaluate analytical methods for determining them. Additionally, the student is able to review critically arguments for and against supplementation.		
6	European Food Safety	5	European food safety including legislation, safety evaluation, and measures of risk management and control regarding chemical and biological safety, labelling & nutrition, food improvement agents, novel foods, animal feed, animal by products, food waste, and horizontal topics related to food safety.	4	Similar to education ways I am used to from my home university.

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

Yes, the university offered a lot of courses in English.

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

Half-half. I had the feeling most courses were more food technology based instead of Nutrition and Health oriented.

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

Yes. I think the courses were a bit easier than the ones I normally follow in my home university, but they were still challenging enough.

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

Not completely. At some point I was a bit stuck with my courses because of overlapping time tables, which caused me to choose some courses that I would have preferred to not opt for.

f. What is it like to study there?

Overall, you don't have a lot of lectures a week. They do request you to dive into a lot of scientific literature. Instead of exams, it is more important to develop your opinions and knowledge through writing essays. For some courses, the course is also finalised by an oral examination.

g. What is the culture of the university?

The lecturers are easily approachable, they love to go into discussions and are always open to answer questions. The local students, however, are extremely distant and do not engage with each other OR international students at all.

I am used to be more engaged with my fellow students and actually making group work as a group and putting effort into collaboration. This is something that I missed in the university of Helsinki. Everyone is extremely individualised there.

h. What does the university offer students additionally?

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

Lots of students associations, UNIsports (offering sport facilities for low prices), cheap student cafeterias with good food.

5. Housing-traveling-living

a. What are the possibilities for housing?

Via the election procedure for the university I was able to request student housing. There are two companies which offer housing for students. Shared and private apartments. The rent was quite high. I did request a shared apartment and ended up in a studio.

b. What is the culture like?

The Finnish society works quite different from the Dutch one.

Finnish people are way more conservative, quiet and respectful of other people's personal space.

This is something I enjoyed but also made it harder to integrate in the society.

The local cuisine is easy but nice. Restaurant culture was extremely expensive.

It was fun to try out a lot of different activities because of the weather differences. It was amazing to see the season change and to be able to be a part of this.

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

As a student in Finland you get a public transport card. You pay 40 euros for travelling for 30 days, which gives you the ability to travel inside of Helsinki unlimitedly in the most common zone.

I was able to take a bus or tram to the university in the city centre or walk when I was at the other campus. The public transport is extremely well organized and always on time, you never have to wait for any longer than 5 minutes.

6. Expenses

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

Category	Expenses
Travelling there	300
Visa - if applicable	-
Vaccinations - if applicable	-
Insurances (extra) - if applicable	-
Daytrips/sight-seeing	1000
Housing costs per month & type of housing/accommodation	630 - studio
Grocery costs per month	250
Public transport costs per month	40
Restaurant/going out for dinner costs per month	100

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

Higher

c. Additional remarks regarding expenses?

Was to be expected.

7. Free time

a. What are must-sees in the area?

Must sees: harbour, national parks, villages across the lakes

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

Camping on one of Helsinki's islands.

8. Challenges & best moment abroad

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

Challenge: making Finnish friends. Downloading dating apps and joining pub crawl.

b. Best memory?

Walking on the sea on a cold winter day.

9. Contact details

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