



WUR Goes Abroad

1. Student information

Study programme WU	Earth and Environment
Exchange semester (dd/mm/yyyy)	10/01/2024 until 27/05/2024
Exchange destination: University	University of Helsinki
Faculty	Faculty of Science
Country	Finland
City	Helsinki

2. Motivation for exchange

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

It was a nice opportunity recommended by everyone to me that had been on exchange.

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

I wanted a northern country and Finland was the one I knew the least about and it was recommended by other students that have been there.

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

This was my only option and I preferred a bigger city so Helsinki was the best choice.

3. Accessibility to reach destination

Do you have any advice about reaching your exchange destination?

I went by plane as it was not profitable to go there with train and/or ferry.

4. University and studying

a. Could you provide some general information about the followed courses?

The course description given on the site in the course catalogue is better. Be sure to look if a course is given in the year you are going as they are not given every year.

	Course	ECTS	Short description of the contents	Appreciation of course: 1(low) – 5(high)	Remarks
1	Global Hydrology	5		4	I got to know some more about Hydrology in Finland which was nice.
2	Atmospheric General Circulation 1	5		3	A more difficult course but manageable.

3	Introduction to the Pleistocene	5	An overview of flora, fauna and humans and their dispersal during the Pleistocene.	5	An interesting course with some small assignments and an excursion to the Natural History museum in Helsinki.
4	Swedish for Beginners 1	3	A1+A2 Swedish	5	Very nice teacher and the course was given in the city center at the language center.
5	Physics of lakes and rivers	5		5	Learned new stuff about lakes.
6	Boundary Layer processes 1	5		4	This was a nice follow up course to Boundary Layer Processes which I followed in Wageningen.

b. I had sufficient possibilities to select suitable courses that were taught in English (Yes - Explain): Master courses are given in English.

c. I had sufficient possibilities to select suitable courses in my field of interest (Yes - Explain): Yes they have an atmospheric science master track from which I followed most of the courses.

d. I am satisfied with the level of the courses that I followed (Yes - Explain): Yes, the level of the master courses is similar to the level I experienced in Wageningen.

e. I am satisfied, in the end, with the selection of courses I followed (Yes - Explain): The courses I took were perfect for me as I went to university 4 days in the week and had a long weekend which allowed me to explore the city and country.

f. What is it like to study there?

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

The classes are very small and the Finnish students and teachers are a bit more distant. Most of the courses used weekly assignments that were graded and were a percentage of the final grade which was nice as it kept you up to date.

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?

The teachers do a fine job at presenting and explaining but when to lecture is over, they are most of the times the first ones to leave the classroom. They are more distant than teachers at the WUR but are friendly relaxed and always open to give you more time if you need it.

h. What does the university offer students additionally?

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

There was a university gym at my campus but I did not use it as it was a bit expensive.

The café offered a warm meal between 11:00 and 15:00 for 2.95!

Which was very important was the introduction days which were not very spectacular in January but I got a tutor group with other internationals who went to the same campus.

My friend group existed from people from this group and people that lived in the same building UniHome as me which was very nice!

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?

I ended up at UniHome where I got offered a studio for 615 euro per month which was one bus for 10 minutes from my campus (Kumpula). UniHome is full of international students so all my friends lived there too.

b. What is the culture like?

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

Finnish people are calm, respectful and silent. They prefer to maintain personal distance but if you ask something will gladly help you, but they are not the kind of people to start a conversation.

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

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

Helsinki is divided into 4 zones where A was the city center and I lived in B. It was 40 euros per month to have public transport for these two zones which is a very good deal. There are busses, trains, metros and you can use the ferry to go to Suomenlinna, an island near the city center. Finland has the Omnibus which goes through the whole country which has very good deals with a student discount!

6. Expenses

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

Category	Expenses
Travelling there	150
Visa - if applicable	-
Vaccinations - if applicable	-
Insurances (extra) - if applicable	-
Daytrips/sight-seeing	20/40
Housing costs per month & type of housing/accommodation	615
Grocery costs per month	Similar to Wageningen
Public transport costs per month	40
Restaurant/going out for dinner costs per month	25/30

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

The supermarket is a bit more expensive compared to the Netherlands and eating in a restaurant is a lot more expensive.

c. Additional remarks regarding expenses?

Alcohol is expensive. The cheapest option was on the boat to or from Tallinn in Estonia.

7. Free time

a. What are must-sees in the area?

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

I recommend national park Oulanka and an excursion to Lapland is a must. I visited a lot of cities from which I liked Oulu, Vassa and Tampere the most.

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

Look on the sites of all the musea in Helsinki as there are free admission days. Most of the times ESN also organises an excursion on those days. You can also go for 3.50 to concerts two weeks before the performance.

8. Challenges & best moment abroad

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

My largest struggle was sport facilities. Due to the weather, it was not that nice to do sports outside most of the time and the university offers not that much sport compared to all the sport associations we have in Wageningen. I did went to the swimming pool where there was a student discount.

b. Best memory?

The best memory was my friends from Wageningen visiting me and walking trough nature and Helsinki in the snow.

9. Contact details

Is the reader allowed to contact the writer?	yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no <input type="checkbox"/>
Name & email address (if yes)	douwe.kleinswormink@wur.nl	