



WUR Goes Abroad

1. Student information

Study programme WU	Bsc Nutrition and Health
Exchange semester (dd/mm/yyyy)	15/01/2024 until 31/05/2024
Exchange destination: University	University of Helsinki
Faculty	Faculty of biological and environmental sciences
Country	Finland
City	Helsinki

2. Motivation for exchange

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

I wanted to experience how it is to live alone in a (somewhat) strange country and explore the culture and nature of another country.

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

I have family there, I love the nature and the country and the educational system seemed something for me.

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

I wanted to go to a bigger city, and the courses here were something that fit my interests.

3. Accessibility to reach destination

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

I went by plane, but I know that you can also go by car and take the boat from Sweden to Finland.

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	Neuropharmacology	5	Nervous system diseases and how pharmacology has had an influence, with different guest lecturers	3	

2	Basic mechanisms of nervous system diseases	5	Different guest lecturers explain the basic mechanisms of nervous system diseases	3	Is online!
3	Microbial Genetics and Evolution – lecture course	5	Different forms of microbial evolution and its genetic consequences	5	I really liked the lecturer of this course. He seemed enthusiastic in his subject and was very interactive in his lectures.
4	Human and cancer genetics	5	Mostly the basics of human genetics and the methodologies used, a little bit about cancer	2	The lecturer only read of the slides and there was not really anything interactive in the lectures. The subject was also not what I that interesting to me.
5	System and cognitive neuroscience	5	Mostly about the brain, it covers a lot of subjects in neuroscience	4	It was an online module, which was a bit long in my opinion for 5 credits. But I really enjoyed the content of the module.
6					

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

Yes, it was very clear on the website which courses were taught in Finnish, Swedish or English and which were suitable for exchange students.

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

Yes, first I had a problem with it because I had to stick to the faculty of forestry, but then when they moved me to another one I had no problem with finding courses.

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

Yes, some courses were more demanding than other courses, but overall it wasn't too much work for all of them. I thought the courses were overall a lot of independent work.

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

Partly, because most of my courses in the first period of my exchange were online, which was a bit boring not meeting any people and was not good for my motivation. But in the second period I had more interactive courses. Content-related the courses were all good and fit my interest very well.

f. What is it like to study there?

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

The workload was not very high for my courses, but I heard from other students it really depends on the course. Examination was different for many courses. Mine were either open-book and online, or in an examinarium, a room with computers and camera's where you had to book a place. I personally liked the flexibility of it. I've also heard of people making exams on paper as well. The study forms were for me predominantly lectures or online modules. I had one course where we had to hand in assignments and give a presentation. But I've heard that other people had more diverse study forms.

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?

In my experience there was not much contact between the students and lecturers, but that could also be because of the courses I chose. The engagement with local students was not really present, especially with the regular lecture courses and online courses. With the one group assignment I noticed that the local students were not really wanting to connect with the other group members like I've sometimes experienced at the WUR. But personally it did not really matter to me.

h. What does the university offer students additionally?

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

If you want sufficient, warm and cheap lunch, Helsinki is the perfect spot to go. The vegetarian options were even cheaper and the lunch coffee was cheaper than normal. You get a good filling meal that complies with the Dutch wheel of five.

You can buy a membership at unisport, which is not as cheap as in Wageningen but also not very expensive. Moreover, student rights offer a lot of discounts, for example also for public transport.

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?

Rooms are generally pretty expensive in Helsinki. Most people I know rented studio's or private rooms with a shared kitchen/bathroom from student housing. They all paid a lot for their rooms. Some people did not even get a room close to their campus. I got lucky and rented a private room with shared kitchen/bathroom that was very cheap and was very close to my campus.

b. What is the culture like?

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

I did not live with Finnish people, but overall they are more reserved. I have heard from other people living with Finnish people that they don't really talk or seek any contact. But of course this is a stereotype. I have met many Finnish people that are outgoing and willing to strike 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?

When you are on an exchange you can get a discount on public transport, which is handled in the introduction week. Taxi's are very expensive, Ubers are cheaper. I walked to the university, but most people took the bus.

6. Expenses

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

Category	Expenses
Travelling there	300 euros (away and back)
Visa - if applicable	-
Vaccinations - if applicable	-
Insurances (extra) - if applicable	-
Daytrips/sight-seeing	100euros? (per month)
Housing costs per month & type of housing/accommodation	250 euros for me, but mostly 500-600 euros
Grocery costs per month	250 euros
Public transport costs per month	45 euros
Restaurant/going out for dinner costs per month	150 euros?

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

Higher

c. Additional remarks regarding expenses?

7. Free time

a. What are must-sees in the area?

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

Lapland is a must, but expensive so I would recommend to travel with ESN which has almost half of the normal price. Tallinn is a very beautiful place, and good to get cheap alcohol. I also liked the national parks surrounding Helsinki for a nice hike.

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

Sompa sauna, it's a free public sauna next to the sea. It's a very cool place.

8. Challenges & best moment abroad

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

In the beginning I put a lot of pressure on myself to make friends, which worked counterproductive. I learned to give it time and eventually it caused me to make great friends.

b. Best memory?

Having a lot of fun with my friends and meeting so many nice people.

9. Contact details

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