



# WUR Goes Abroad

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## 1. Student information

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<b>Study programme WU</b>	MEE
<b>Exchange semester (dd/mm/yyyy)</b>	10-1-24 until 31-5-24
<b>Exchange destination: University</b>	Helsinki University
<b>Faculty</b>	Atmospheric Sciences
<b>Country</b>	Finland
<b>City</b>	Helsinki

## 2. Motivation for exchange

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

I thought it would be a great experience and something that would add on to my educational (theoretical) and cultural knowledge.

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

For me, I was interested in experiencing the arctic climate and the change in sun hours during my stay. Moreover, they speak English well over there and the nature is very beautiful.

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

The university provided courses that were of interest to me. Moreover, they add well to the courses given at Wageningen University. Additionally, the quality of lectures is comparable to the ones at WUR.

## 3. Accessibility to reach destination

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

My advice would be to fly to the destination. Although one would receive a 'green travel' fund otherwise, the additional costs are larger than this fund. The flight is quick (+- 2 hours) and easy (as seen from The Netherlands).

## 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
<b>1</b>	<i>Boundary Layer Physics I</i>	5	Give practical and theoretical information about BLPs.	4	
<b>2</b>	<i>Convective Weather Systems and Climate</i>	5	Tropical meteorological processes.	4	
<b>3</b>	<i>Physics of Lakes and Rivers</i>	5	As the title says, one will study the behaviour of lakes and rivers with some theoretical explanation.	5	
<b>4</b>	<i>Atmospheric General Circulation I</i>	5	Course about atmospheric processes such as atmospheric cells, momentum budgets and surface-atmospheric interactions.	3	This course is way more physics based that thought beforehand. One must have some physics knowledge beforehand.
<b>5</b>	<i>Coastal Oceanography</i>	5	Interesting course about the coastal part of the ocean (i.e. the "shallow" parts of oceans); How they interact with oceanic and land and explanation of processes in there.	5	I really recommend this course. Very nice but again physics based. You must be "happy" to work with formulas.
<b>6</b>	<i>Global Hydrology</i>	5	A global view of hydrology (mixed with some Finnish hydrology).	4	

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

Yes

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

Yes

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

Yes

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

Yes

**f. What is it like to study there?**

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

When following a course, it is often expected to make mandatory homework each week. Apart from that, the workload is lower as compared to the WUR. Some courses have exams at the end of the period, some don't (only reports, presentations ...). Teachers are very flexible and can be contacted easily. Moreover, the lesson materials are given fully digitally.

**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?*

Finnish culture is very different compared to Dutch culture. It is not common to talk to people you don't know and students tend to be silent during lectures, not asking questions at all. Lectures are very approachable but only if you do it yourself. The chances of them approaching you are very slim in my experience.

**h. What does the university offer students additionally?**

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

It is common to eat a hot meal twice a day. Therefore, one could get a warm meal at the Uni cafeteria during lunch hours for cheap prices (3 euros for me). Moreover, sport rights can be bought but keep in mind that outdoor sports are not always possible due to excessive snow. The university also offers student rooms when applying for an Erasmus exchange.

## **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 got one offer for a room. It was a "take it or leave it" situation so if you deny the room you have to look for yourself. The room was offered to me after applying for an exchange. It was a studio room with sufficient space for people to come over. Rent rates were around 600 euros.

**b. What is the culture like?**

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

Compared to The Netherlands, the main difference is the way people behave. Finnish people are very on their own. They will not ask you questions or try to know you better (often, but not always true!) and try to keep a distance from each other outside. On the other hand, Finnish people treat nature very nice (no litter anywhere) and do not get angry quickly (e.g. they almost never honk when another road user makes a mistake). I find other things such as cuisine and general looks of people comparable to The Netherlands.

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

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

As a student, one can apply for a travel card (comparable to the OV-card back home). Fees are approximately 40 euros per month and differ depending on the amount of regions you want to travel in. Helsinki is divided into 4 regions as explained on the internet.

## 6. Expenses

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

Category	Expenses
Travelling there	40 /month
Visa - if applicable	-
Vaccinations - if applicable	-
Insurances (extra) - if applicable	-
Daytrips/sight-seeing	Varying (Museums often free of charge)
Housing costs per month & type of housing/accommodation	600 /month
Grocery costs per month	250-400 /month
Public transport costs per month	40 / month
Restaurant/going out for dinner costs per month	0-200 / month

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

Higher, but depending on your lifestyle.

**c. Additional remarks regarding expenses?**

Note that expenses can be cut a bit. Museums are cheaper or even free at certain days. Some groceries are cheaper than others (LIDL is a generally cheap supermarket I find) and travelling costs can be cheap when buying tickets early.

## 7. Free time

### a. What are must-sees in the area?

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

Mainly museums, nature and the islands around Helsinki (such as Suomenlinna).  
Definitely pay a visit to Lapland.

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

Most things are well described in a travel guide I think.

## 8. Challenges & best moment abroad

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

My main challenge was to eat hot meals for lunch and not to fall asleep afterward 😊

### b. Best memory?

To meet new (international) friends to share my experiences with!

## 9. Contact details

<b>Is the reader allowed to contact the writer?</b>	yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Name &amp; email address (if yes)</b>	<a href="mailto:thijs.wissing@wur.nl">thijs.wissing@wur.nl</a> ps. Note that this email is not valid anymore after I leave the WUR.	