



WUR Goes Abroad

1. Student information

Study programme WU	BSc Animal Sciences
Exchange semester (dd/mm/yyyy)	3/2/2024 until 30/6/2024
Exchange destination: University	NMBU
Faculty	
Country	Norway
City	Ås

2. Motivation for exchange

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

I wanted to discover a different university, a different teaching style and to explore a range of courses that I would not have the chance to follow in WUR. I also wanted to see how animals, from wildlife to domesticated, and research regarding animals, was approached in another country and university.

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

Norway is very different from the Netherlands, but also from my home country. I wanted to study in country that I haven't been before, and it was the perfect chance to discover a Scandinavian country.

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

NMBU is similar to WUR, as it is the life sciences university of Norway.

3. Accessibility to reach destination

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

I travelled by plane to Oslo Airport and then by train and bus to reach Ås, or you can use the Flybus that takes you directly from the airport to the town. However, keep in mind that if you use the Flybus you will need to walk 1-2km from the bus stop, carrying your suitcases, to reach the campus.

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	Ecology and Management of Natural Resources in the Tropics	10	Through lectures and guest speakers we learned about the different ecosystems in the tropics, their biodiversity, their management, the challenges and threats	4	Written exam, presentation and a term paper
2	The Biology of Animal Stress and Its Implications for Animal Welfare	10	The focus was on understanding how stress affects the body, the brain, the immune system, the endocrine system and more. Through scientific studies and the book, we focused on understanding how stress can affect animal welfare, and not learning all the details.	4	Oral exam
3	Human Wildlife Interactions	5	One of my favourite courses. Through lectures and readings, we learned about positive and negative interactions between humans and wildlife and how they can be managed in some cases. We could choose our own topic and write a paper based on the lectures and scientific articles.	5	Term paper only, no exam
4	Product Quality in Aquaculture	5	We learned all about the quality of a product in Norwegian aquaculture, especially Atlantic salmon. The highlight of the course was a 3-day excursion to Stavanger, where we visited companies and learned first-hand all about research, feed and processing salmon for the market.	5	Multiple choice exam
5					
6					

b. I had sufficient possibilities to select suitable courses that were taught in English (Yes, No - Explain): Most courses are available in English, but some might be taught only in Norwegian. Check the language of the course on their course catalogue.

c. I had sufficient possibilities to select suitable courses in my field of interest (Yes, No - Explain): I was free to choose courses from different faculties, as long as I could provide sufficient motivation.

d. I am satisfied with the level of the courses that I followed (Yes, No - Explain): Yes and no. Some courses seemed easier and the lecturers less skilled than in WUR. However, their approach towards students was refreshing. We had more freedom to choose our topics and write a paper about something we were interested in, without having to learn details by heart.

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 academic level is high, the courses seem easier than in WUR, the workload is much less and the contact hours are very limited compared to WUR. So, I had a lot of free time to do other things and I even had 2 free days during the week. Students are supported throughout the course, but it is up to them to read the relevant material and keep up the work.

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 lecturers are all very kind and approachable. They are ready to help with anything you might need. Most classes were multicultural, which was very nice. Norwegian students seem unapproachable or shy, but it is a cultural difference. Once you talk to them, they are always very kind and open.

h. What does the university offer students additionally?

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

There are cafeterias in some university buildings, not in all. The sports facilities, Eika sportsenter, is one of the highlights. Since Ås is a small town, there is not much to do on a daily basis, so socializing through sports, campus life, maybe the student association and roommates is a must.

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?

You can sign up for a room through Sias. Most students live in student accommodation around the same area, so it is easy to find your friends. I lived in a corridor with 6 people, sharing one toilet, one shower, and one kitchen. The rent rates were similar to Wageningen.

b. What is the culture like?

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

One thing that stands out is that Norwegian people seem not social. Their culture is to not bother people around them, but once you get to know them they can be extremely kind and friendly. Also, cars will always stop for you to cross the road. The local cuisine is not great, except for their salmon and their cinnamon buns.

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

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

Public transport is easily accessible and organized. You can download the apps Vy and Ruter to buy bus and train tickets. It can be quite expensive, but there are some student tickets and the Ruter app offers discounts with every ticket that you buy, especially if you use it frequently.

6. Expenses

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

Category	Expenses
Travelling there	200 euros
Visa - if applicable	
Vaccinations - if applicable	
Insurances (extra) - if applicable	
Daytrips/sight-seeing	30-50 euros
Housing costs per month & type of housing/accommodation	350 euros
Grocery costs per month	200 euros
Public transport costs per month	Min 50 euros
Restaurant/going out for dinner costs per month	

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

c. Additional remarks regarding expenses?

They use NOK (Norwegian Kroner) not Euros.

7. Free time

a. What are must-sees in the area?

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

Going to Oslo for sure, as it is very close to Ås by train. You can visit something new in Oslo almost every weekend. Some museums and activities have student/youth discounts. Traveling by train or plane to Bergen, Stavanger, Alesund, Trondheim and Lapland or Lofoten Islands are further away but worth it. You can get a discount on plane tickets with Norwegian Airlines, if you are below 26 years old, with the code UNDER26.

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

Norwegian nature is amazing and a must see! Go hiking, but be careful if you are a beginner try the beginner hikes first, use proper gear and clothing. Go skiing and cross-country skiing, visit a lake, and definitely take one or more fjord cruises.

8. Challenges & best moment abroad

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

Be prepared when doing outdoor activities, don't underestimate nature and the Norwegians, they are used to doing these activities but you might not be. Take care of yourself and wear proper clothes.

b. Best memory?

The Lapland trip with ESN, where we saw reindeer, went into the sauna and then the freezing sea, did a husky sleigh ride and much more. Also, visiting Alesund with a group of friends, renting a car and seeing many different viewpoints of the fjord, taking the fjord cruise, seeing the Trollstingen and hiking.

9. Contact details

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