



WUR Goes Abroad

1. Student information

Study programme WU	BBI
Exchange semester (dd/mm/yyyy)	08/01/2024 until 28/05/2024
Exchange destination: University	NMBU
Faculty	Faculty of Biosciences
Country	Norway
City	Ås

2. Motivation for exchange

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

I needed to finish my BSc degree, and had finished all of my obligatory courses, so I decided it would be a good choice for me to go abroad as a way of broadening my horizons. I also wanted to see the world, how it is studied, and how it is handled via a new perspective (especially from a scientific point of view).

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

I am openly genderqueer, so it was a safer option for me to go up north. Besides this I already had two friends of mine who did an exchange semester in Norway, at the NMBU, so I had already heard good things about the country.

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

Like I stated before, two of my friends had already told me great things about the university which made it a desirable choice. Furthermore the courses offered at the NMBU were very interesting to me and my study interests, making it a good choice for me to go to the NMBU.

3. Accessibility to reach destination

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

It is definitely doable via bus or car, though it takes a very long time to do so. When driving yourself, take enough rests and do not rush your journey. Also be aware of the customs and international policies on what you can and cannot bring along with you.

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	BIO315 – Behavioural Biology in Fishes	10	The course focuses on the behaviour, specifically in fish, and how to improve animal welfare. It has a good mix of theoretical and practical work.	3	
2	BIO324 – Plant Adaptation to Climate	10	Purely theoretical course on plants and their ability to adapt to stresses. Mainly biology related, with some hints of production.	4	
3	PJH250 – Plant Production in a Controlled Environment	10	Mainly theoretically focused course on plants grown in controlled environments such as greenhouses. Lots of contact hours and student engagement is encouraged	4	
4					
5					
6					

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

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

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

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 pretty similar to that of WUR, though the university mostly focuses on theoretical knowledge compared to the amount of practical work WUR offers which was disappointing. The workload and material were appropriate for the course level that was offered; the only complaint I really had besides the focus on theory is that the semesters are much much longer than the six week periods in Wageningen.

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 only time I was in a Norwegian lecture was during my first course (BIO315), though I was the only non-Norwegian student following that course. Besides this it was rather clear to find the lectures, talk to lecturers, follow along with the courses. The students are a bit more shy, so talking to them can be hard unless you approach them yourself.

h. What does the university offer students additionally?

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

The catering was rather affordable to Norwegian standards. There were sports facilities with ample student sports associations, though I did miss the opportunity to swim (as a swimmer). The outdoor sports field was only available for use starting in June, despite good weather starting in April already, which was a shame. Student housing was rather good, and this housing had laundry facilities one could use free of charge.

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?

Student housing was rather easy to find, and also much more affordable than Dutch student housing. The rooms were spacious enough for someone to live in, especially with a shared kitchen making it possible to use more space in your room for yourself.

b. What is the culture like?

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

It was harder to eat in Norway as someone with a vegetarian diet, but it was still doable. The main issue was the pricing of everything being higher than I am used to. The people tend to keep to themselves unless actively approached, which was hard to get used to. This was also a struggle when it came to living situations, as it was hard to be social with roommates that seemed to want to avoid you.

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

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

It was rather difficult to go anywhere by public transport when you have a Dutch bank account. The commonly used means to get tickets (Vipps) did not recognize IBANs with letters, which meant I was forced to either get a ticket physically (only at train stations) or ask a friend to pay for my ticket as well. Reaching campus was really doable luckily, as it was a ten-to-fifteen-minute walk to most buildings.

6. Expenses

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

Category	Expenses
Travelling there	~100 euros for a one way trip via Flixbus

Visa - if applicable	Not applicable
Vaccinations - if applicable	Not applicable
Insurances (extra) - if applicable	Not applicable
Daytrips/sight-seeing	Total ~300 euros (did not do a lot)
Housing costs per month & type of housing/accommodation	~350 euros a month for a room with a shared corridor
Grocery costs per month	~200 euros a month
Public transport costs per month	~50 euros a month
Restaurant/going out for dinner costs per month	Went once, was about 28 euros

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

c. Additional remarks regarding expenses?

I did not travel all too much, so costs for traveling and trips may not be representative.

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 did not travel outside of sports, but the fields in Oslo are very nice. Bergen and Trondheim do look very appealing from what I've seen during weekends of sports tournaments.

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

Again: I did not travel outside of sports-related activities.

8. Challenges & best moment abroad

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

Homesickness was my greatest challenge, though I kept close contact with my good friends and had several online appointments with the student psychologist of WUR. The university in Norway also did not allow for me to use my chosen name, which got me in a period of saddened moods.

b. Best memory?

Finishing 4th of Norway with the ultimate frisbee team from Ås.

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)	Pine.akkerman@wur.nl	