



# WUR Goes Abroad

## 1. Student Information

<b>Field of study in Wageningen</b>	Bachelor Nutrition & Health
<b>Study period exchange (dd/mm/yyyy)</b>	(27/09/2019) until (28/01/2020)
<b>Country (exchange)</b>	Poland
<b>City (exchange)</b>	Warsaw
<b>University (exchange)</b>	SGGW (WULS)
<b>Faculty (exchange)</b>	Multiple: Animal Science, Food Technology, Human Nutrition, Economics, Agriculture and Biology, Sociology and Education

## 2. Motivation for exchange

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

The reason I wanted to go on exchange exists of multiple reasons, I believe. First of all, I heard many great stories about the adventures on Erasmus, how people grow mentally and how incredibly insightful it can be to see the world of universities from a completely different perspective. We all get education, we all study, and still the concept of studying can be perceived in so many different ways. Second of all, I felt that I needed a break from the Wageningen. It has an excellent university of course, but brings a lot of pressure with it too. And sometimes you want to temporarily escape from the little bubble you created for yourself during your bachelor, seek new experiences in another bubble for four months, and go back with a fresh mind; a reset.

### What is the reason you chose for this country/university?

The fair and main answer is that my first three preferences weren't fit for me, and so I was not allowed to go there. But then Poland, Warsaw was on the remaining list and I thought "any country is insightful actually, no matter where, when, what or how". Poland is also close to the other half of my blood: Bulgaria, so I could visit them also. Furthermore I realised that I have no clue how this country actually works, I just had no imagine of Poland when I thought of it, and thus I wanted to change that.

## 3. Accessibility to reach destination

### Do you have any tips to reach your exchange destination? (E.g. bus, train, etc.)

I arrived by plane, which was fine, but very heavy for the environment. I went back however by train: over Frankfurt (Oder) and Berlin. It takes 14.5 hours, but you can take as much luggage as you want, it is really cheap and a lot better for the environment.

## 4. University and studying

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>	Food in culture and society: Introduction to sociology of food	4	About the history of food, culture around food, food taboos, food habits, marketing and what it does with our society, the influence of food on us and our society and vice versa.	4	Very interesting subject, but not in a stimulating way thought
<b>2</b>	Alcoholic beverages	2	About the effect that ethanol has on our body, how it is made, how there can be calculated with it	4	Well-thought, but not very clear what the learning outcomes were and therefore what needed to be studied for the exam was unclear
<b>3</b>	Design thinking in food technology	2	About the marketing world and how to design and introduce a new (food)product	4	Actually a very weird course, but also very interactive, which I liked
<b>4</b>	Ecological aspects of food and nutrition	6	Ecological aspects of food and nutrition is about all the influences food has on the environment, and mainly about organic agriculture and the differences with conventional agriculture.	4	
<b>5</b>	Nutrition through the life span	5	Is literally about nutrition through the lifespan: what is recommended for infants, babies, children, adolescents, adults and elderly, and why	4	
<b>6</b>	Organizational behaviour	5	A very interesting course about the psychology behind a group, behind the individual, leadership, groupwork and teams.	5	
<b>7</b>	Organic raw food materials and products	3	About organic agriculture and the	5	Very flexible in the required exam: could be written in

			differences with conventional agriculture, but very specifically focused on the differences in macro- and micronutrients and minerals.		combination with a documentary, could be a 20-page report.
8	Preventive nutrition	5	About the correlation of certain diets, the differences between countries and regions and the effects on a few main diseases like cancer, cardiovascular disease and high blood pressure for example.	4	
9	Research models in nanomedicine	4	Very interesting course about nanomedicine, existing of a few lectures explaining all the basics with details about nanomedicine (what it is, what they are used for, how they are used, when they are used), followed by practicals in which this information was demonstrated.	5	

**How is the study formalized? (E.g. study forms, academic level, examination, workload, lesson material)**

The Erasmus students can follow courses in English, but they are mainly focused on Erasmus only. Sometimes there is an exception and Erasmus students are following a general English course, mainly for Polish students, but then immediately (for some reason) there are only three Erasmus students joining. The Polish students are apparently not very attentive to the lectures, so teachers are immensely happy when students put in just a little bit of effort. The grading-system goes from 1 to 5, with 1 as the lowest grade you can get, and a 5 representing the Dutch 10. Unlike in the Netherlands, this 5 is very easy to get, especially for students from the WUR, since we are used to quite a different level (I think). Examination is not very fixed (the schedule of the courses neither by the way, there was a lot of fuzz about when which course was going to start at the beginning of Erasmus, and the "MyPortal" of the WUR was replaced there with an Excel-sheet for all the Erasmus students only). Examination is possible in either the form of an exam (written or orally, can be discussed with the teacher, most are very relaxed and open to all possibilities), a presentation (mostly multiple and in combination with a group-project), or a report.

The lesson material were the lectures, and the content was either never given so you just had to be present and make notes, or it was send to the whole class at the end, right before all the exams, in the form of a PowerPoint.

**What is the culture of the university? (E.g. How approachable are the lecturers, engagement with local students? What are the differences with the WUR?)**

The SGGW is quite a big campus, so contact with any other student other than your classmates is very hard, and Polish students are not likely to cross your path, unless you're part of the local ESN. Once you made contact though, everyone is very willing to help I've noticed. The lecturers are very open and approachable. A student can always ask anything: the teachers even like it very much when students engage and reward this with their enthusiasm. I find that the biggest difference with the WUR is that the teacher actually sees you, and gives you lots of individual attention may you require it. They also appreciate every little thing you do extra or all the enthusiasm you put in, which feels very motivating. I could set my own goal of how hard I wanted to make this Erasmus, since the general level of SGGW is not that high/hard. In the end, I challenged myself quite a bit, because a lot of the courses were very interesting, and the moment the teacher saw that you were enthusiastic about it, they were enthusiastic too and that ended up in us both being motivated to make the best of it.

**What does the university offer the student additionally? (E.g. Catering, sports facilities, laundry facilities?)**

There are laundry facilities that you have to make use of, there is a canteen on campus, a pool, a little gym, a bigger gym with free fitness lessons and the dorms are attached to the campus, so everything is walking-distance once you live in there.

## 5.Housing-travelling-living

**What are the possibilities for housing? (E.g. Availability to sign up for a room on campus, private rooms, rent rates?)**

The campus is a great possibility, but a room is shared with one or two other people of the same sex, so you have to change your mindset to that because it mind need some adjusting thoughts. The city centre also has great apartments though, but it takes half an hour travelling approximately to the campus and it is much more expensive compared to the dorms.

**What is the culture of the country like? (E.g. Differences with home, local cuisine, habits, manners?)**

The culture of Poland is incredibly different. The borders are actually only open for international traffic/tourism since 30 years, mainly because of the Soviet Union and the fact that Poland was a satellite country. Because the World War II and the Soviet Union were so hard on them, they grew a little quiet and more in the background. The two main rules of respect are:

1. Don't speak too loud in public transport (mainly the buss)
2. Never ever cross a red light as a pedestrian (they couldn't care less about cars driving too fast though, funny enough)

**Could you give a general price indication of the place of residence compared to living in Wageningen?**

The dorm where I lived, I shared with two other people. My rent was €85,-. Friends of mine who rented a flat in the city centre paid €250,- approximately.

**Could you give some information about public transport infrastructure? (E.g. Cost public transport card, taxi prices, how to travel to the university?)**

## 6. Free time

**What are must-sees in the area? (E.g. nearby destinations, how do you prefer to travel, when to plan?)**

Bus, metro and tram are all very pleasant and mostly on time. The public transport was actually very good. The city centre was my favourite place: it has lots of delicious food-places and amazing coffee-café's where I spent hours studying and chatting with friends.

**What does not appear in the travel guide, but is worth a visit?**

Mainly the food- and coffee-places are worth a visit: Vege Miasto, Falla, Pare Osob, Vincent Boulangerie, Shabby Chich Coffee, Miodowa Café, STOR, Orzo, Charlotte, Labour Café, Parzona...

The Zakopane mountains are stunning, the old town, all the free-walking tours there are very well arranged and very clear with lots of information, the Polish Wodka Museum is very funny and very well presented (just like all the other musea there actually!), the Koszyki food hall is very cosy and has lots to offer, E. Wedel is the well-known chocolate brand and has a lot of places where you can taste it, Wilanow Palace has a very pretty light show in the winter, BioBazar.

**Do you have general tips and tricks about leisure time (E.g. recommendations for restaurants, going out?)**

the Polish-dinner time is – unlike expected from my side actually – already at 18h. many restaurants close around 21h, so going to the city centre on time is important. From 2pm onwards, the traffic from the campus towards the city centre is crazy busy, so definitely take twenty minutes extra into account, or not even half an hour.

In the supermarkets they barely speak English, Polish people in general actually. But they really appreciate it when you try to say something in Polish, even if it's just "hi", or "have a good day".

## 7.Challenges & best moment abroad

**What was a challenge you have experienced?**

Saying goodbye to everyone who visits me, and to everyone who you have to leave behind at the end of your Erasmus is something I hated. I am the worst at goodbyes (don't know if anyone is ever really "good" at saying goodbye, but I believe that I am particularly bad at it) and letting it go. The thought that you create a temporary world for four months and you'll then just completely leave it, is actually mind-blowing in a not so positive way.

I also struggled with finding my own eating-pattern. The kitchen was shared with 100 other people in my hallway, and it had a very absent atmosphere. There were only two chairs and desks in the room, so I could never really invite people over to eat or cook together. Sometimes I ate together with my roommates, which was always very cosy,

but I was very anxious about cooking and eating alone (I just really really don't like that, eating is meant to be cosy in my opinion).

**What was your best memory abroad?**

Oof, a lot: I made friends that I never could've wished for, I had the best dorm-buddies with lovely Port- and movie-nights, I went with my best friends there to Zakopane for a backpack-mountain-trip that was absolutely breath-taking, the super cheap vegan restaurant options are amazing there...

**8. Contact details (optional)**

<b>Is the reader allowed to contact the writer?</b>	yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Name/e-mail</b>	Sophie Dobrev / sdobrev97@gmail.com	