



WUR Goes Abroad

1. Student Information

Field of study in Wageningen	Biobased and Circular Economy
Study period exchange (dd/mm/yyyy)	01/09/2021 until 21/12/2021
Country (exchange)	Canada
City (exchange)	Edmonton
University (exchange)	University of Alberta
Faculty (exchange)	Faculty of Renewables

2. Motivation for exchange

Why did you choose to go on study exchange?

I wanted to go on an exchange, because I had a very pleasant experience going on an exchange in my bachelors. Therefore, I wanted to take the opportunity to go again in my Masters. It is such a meaningful experience on multiple levels.

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

I wanted to go to a country with high living standards and beautiful nature. In my Bachelor I went to Finland, and now I wanted to go outside of Europe. I was doubting between going to Australia or Canada. But somehow the cold countries are really appealing to me.

3. Accessibility to reach destination

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

Definitely by plane and from the airport by public transport.

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
1	Sustainability of food and bio-based production (AFNS 542)	6	Focusses on LCA, the ISO guidelines, you have to do an inventory analysis and analyse your own product and give a presentation about this.	5	Very very nice course! Really focusses on your learning. There are discussion forums in which you have to discuss about relevant topics and you have to read a lot of newsarticles. Exams were quite easy, but you leant a lot. The exercises and papers where challenging, but nice to do.
2	Trade and globalization in food/resources (AREC 685)	6	Global food policies, market equilibrium	3	Interesting, but not very inspiring. A lot of individual work. Relates to very actual topics.
3	Environmental assessment principles and methods (REN R 710)	6	Focusses on Alberta and its nature, how to protect this and how to review the files of companies that ask whether they can do certain things that could potentially harm nature.	2	Very specific for the Canadian country, so sometimes hard to understand the circumstances of nature areas and specific Canadian policies.

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

The academic level was good, a little lower than in Wageningen I would say. The courses looked a bit different, there were more individual assignments and papers. Every course also had multiple exams, either a midterm and an endterm or multiple exams throughout the period. Articles and books to work with were all provided online. It was also remarkable that for a lot of papers there was no need to do a literature research for relevant articles, but the teacher provide you with the articles you need to write about. Therefore you need to pay extra attention to the way of writing, because every student is writing about the same.

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?)

Unfortunately most of my courses were online, therefore I had little experience with going to lectures. But the lecturers I saw in real-life and the ones I met online were very approachable and really wanted you to take out the maximum possible. Overall my classes were quite small, like 10-30 students per course. However, there was not at all interaction between students. The atmosphere was more individually, so little group assignments and a lot of individual work. Also in class the people did not seem to know one another, which is quite different than in Wageningen.

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

There are very good sports facilities at the UofA, the gym is totally free and very big! On top of that you can follow group lessons, but unlike in Wageningen, you pay for those and you follow them throughout the whole semester. For example I followed a kickboxing course, which was for 12 weeks and costs around \$80. I really liked this, because you create a routine (I followed three courses like this) and you work out with the same people once a week.

There are catering opportunities, you can buy a meal plan and then you can have lunch/diner at the university every day. However this is quite expensive, so I chose to not do it and cook for myself and with my flatmates. It may also depend on with how many people you share a kitchen.

It depends on where you live whether there are laundry facilities, my building offered it to me.

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?)

There are various houses to choose from, such as I-house, Nipisiy, the HUB, graduate house.

- I-house:
 - o Pro: nice community of people, they really invest in building a relationship

- Con: very old building, elevator is broken all the time and kitchen and common places are very old and need a renovation & quite expensive
- The HUB:
 - Pro: living with 3 flatmates, cheapest opportunity
 - Con: it is in a mall, so you live above some food courts
- Nipisiy:
 - Pro: very new, living with multiple (4/5?) flatmates
 - Con: most expensive option
- Graduate house:
 - Pro: you live with 2 people, so 1 flatmate
 - Con: very expensive

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

Everything is big, like the cars and the buildings. I really missed the 'coziness' and a nice atmosphere in the city or in buildings, it was all just functional.

The Canadian people were really really friendly. Every time I met a local they introduced me to their culture and invited me over for dinner. In the bus everyone said 'thank you' to the bus driver.

The cuisine and the eating habits were totally different. There were a lot of bagels and cheddar involved.

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

It was a little bit more expensive than living in Wageningen, but mostly because of the activities I did. So just the groceries and the rent were a little bit more than in Wageningen, but not shockingly high.

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

You would probably live in the university area, so you can walk to the university or the supermarket. If you take public transportation to another part of the city or to the airport you can use your OneCard. You can get this card at the university and I think it costs \$25.

6. Free time

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

- Elk Island – by car
- Rocky Mountains – by car

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

- Cook county – for a real Albertan experience (such as line dancing)
- Cinema – try the buttery salty popcorn (not my favourite)
- Halloween - Deadmonton
- Whyte Avenue

- Made by Marcus – ice cream place
- West Edmonton Mall – second biggest mall in the world (with a big pool, cart place, cinema, hotel, rollercoasters)

7.Challenges & best moment abroad

What was a challenge you have experienced?

- Finding other internationals. Because there was not such a things like ESN and there were no activities organized at all to let people connect to one another. Therefore we had a hard time to find other internationals in the beginning.
- However, in every residence building they organized a lot of activities. So we met a lot of fellow Hub-bees. After some time we met people from I-house and then we could connect with them and attend the organized parties. That there were no activities organized could be caused by Covid.

What was your best memory abroad?

Definitely all the travels!

- Rocky mountains (in the summer and winter)

The best part of living in Edmonton, being so close to the Rockies! In a 3 hour drive you are in Jasper and in 5 hours you are in Banff. We did two trips, one in September and one in December. In September the weather was amazing, and the nature was blossoming. We saw lots of creeks, falls, caves, lakes and animals.

- Vancouver, Vancouver Island, Whistler,

Vancouver Island was amazing, such beautiful nature and we did a whale watching tour (we saw whales, killer whales, sea lions, sea dogs and dolphins). Whistler was a skiing village and the atmosphere was amazing. A lot of mountains and big trees, where we did a zipline tour.

- East Canada

We rented a camper and were able to relocate it (so we did not need to pay any rent, just the fuel and insurance) from Halifax to Calgary. It was a big drive, around 7000 km. But we saw so much of Canada, all the different provinces, nature and animals. My favourite parts were the peaceful villages in Nova Scotia, the nature in Ontario and the big cities Quebec, Ottawa and Toronto.

8. Contact details (optional)

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