



# WUR Goes Abroad

## 1. Student Information

<b>Field of study in Wageningen</b>	Master Aquaculture and Marine Resource Management
<b>Study period exchange (dd/mm/yyyy)</b>	11/10/2021 until 09/02/2022
<b>Country (exchange)</b>	Portugal
<b>City (exchange)</b>	Aveiro
<b>University (exchange)</b>	Universidade de Aveiro
<b>Faculty (exchange)</b>	Biology

## 2. Motivation for exchange

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

I felt that I had taken too few marine ecology courses in my master's degree because there was little room for electives. I planned to take some extra courses, but I was also looking for adventure and decided to go on a study exchange to combine both.

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

I had never been to Portugal. My exchange was during winter and then the weather in Portugal is just a bit nicer than in the rest of Europe. In Aveiro, located by the sea, I did not need a winter coat with temperatures between 10-20 degrees. Moreover, I did not speak Portuguese, which I thought was a great challenge to learn a foreign language. The offered courses also appealed to me.

## 3. Accessibility to reach destination

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

From Eindhoven, you can easily fly to Porto. From Porto airport, metro line E takes you to Trindade, from which you can either walk or take metro line D to train station São Bento from which a train departs directly to Aveiro. It is all well signposted, and I found it an easy journey.

A tip is to keep the tickets for the train and metro. You pay 50 cents for the ticket, which you will save on your next trip if you reuse the tickets.

## 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	41693 Global Change Biology and Ecology in the Marine Environment	6	The course discusses climate change and how it influences/impacts the marine environment, including the concepts and fundamentals of ocean circulation. Mitigation and adaptation ~ climate governance is also discussed. Furthermore, it discusses the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.	3	The professor speaks little to no English.
2	41694 Biology, Ecology and Conservation of Coastal Zones	6	The course discusses the concept of coastal zones (diversity, processes) and focuses on the conservation of Marine Protected Areas (MPA) (policy frameworks, agencies, risk assessment).	4	The theoretical part was in English. Writing a report on a Portuguese MPA consisted of group work and reading Portuguese legislation.
3	41695 Biology, Ecology and Conservation of the Open and Deep Sea	6	The course discussed: deep-sea ecosystems biodiversity and functioning; methods used for exploration of the deep-sea; human impacts; sustainable use of deep-sea resources; as well as law and policy regarding deep-sea conservation. Especially the practical part of the course was interesting, as it dived into the methods and current research.	5	
4	47389 Biological Pollution Indicators	6	The course discussed water quality indicators with a subdivision into algae and macroinvertebrates. The Water Framework Directive (WFD) and the sampling methods used by WFD are also extensively discussed.	5	Depending on the professor the class was in English or Portuguese.
5	46033 Portuguese as Foreign Language – A1	6		4	
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**How is the study formalized? (E.g. study forms, academic level, examination, workload, lesson material)**

In most courses, the material is provided by the professors. Compared to the Netherlands, I think the workload is lower here. For many courses, you can choose between a continuous evaluation (participation in group work, interim exams) or a final evaluation (in the form of a final exam). This choice is not always clearly explained.

How difficult a subject partly depends on the language in which it is taught (often only master courses are in English, and then it is often partly in Portuguese). Every subject also deals with Erasmus students differently because they sometimes take separate exams and sometimes forget to give an English exam and translate it on the spot.

**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 marine courses I attended were quite small (10-30 students), which makes the teachers very approachable and the engagement with local students is also high (although they don't always speak English as well). Therefore, it resembles the WUR. A big difference is that Portuguese are always 15 minutes late and classes often start later and you can walk in and out of class whenever you want.

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

There are several canteens at the university, but I didn't visit them much. The university also offers sports facilities, but I did not use them.

## 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 few rooms available on campus. The majority of rented rooms are private, you can find them on various websites and Facebook groups. This year (2021-2022) it was difficult to find a room due to many students. Interest rates vary and are sometimes quite high (€250-€450).

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

Portuguese cuisine focuses on fish and meat. Bacalhau (salted cod) is the most famous dish and is often served with rice/potatoes, and a mixed salad of lettuce, tomato, carrot, and sliced onions. At a restaurant, bread with butter and olives are always served. However, if you don't consume, you don't have to pay.

The Portuguese are friendly and helpful, but they often arrive up to 15 minutes late. Daily life starts a bit later, most restaurants open at 19:00-19:30 for dinner and the nightlife also starts late.

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

I lived here quite luxuriously (in RUN - Residências) with a room with a private bathroom, including a sports and study area in the house. For this, I paid €400 for a double room in which I slept alone. I have heard from other Erasmus students that they shared an apartment with 2 or 3 and paid 250-300 euros.

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

If you are in Aveiro everything is within walking distance, from the heart of the centre you reach the university in about 15 minutes, but the university is quite large.

Compared to the Netherlands you can also easily take an uber, for the beach (about 10 km) you pay 7-8 euros. In comparison, the bus to the beach costs 2.45 euros.

There is also the flibus (stop Nazaré) to Lisbon, which costs 10 euros, but it does not always arrive on time. The fastest train to Lisbon takes 2:10 minutes and costs 16 euros with a youth discount (up to 25 years). The urban trains are the cheapest, you can take these from Porto to Aveiro, for example.

## 6. Free time

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

On the weekends you can easily get out and about by public transport. Porto and Coimbra (botanical garden) are easily accessible by train. If you're a fan of surfing, you should visit Nazaré, which is easily accessible by Flibus.

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

At Christmas, you should visit Águeda, here is a meters high Santa Claus and the whole city is beautifully lit up. The journey takes about 40 minutes by train.

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

Visiting the beach is recommended and you should also try surfing at least once. In the "forum" shopping centre there is a small stall where they sell the best tripa in town. Furthermore, restaurant O Bairro is one of my favourites, a bit expensive price range (20-30 euros per person for the main course and wine) but the risotto is delicious.

My favourite bar is Mercado Negro, located on the first floor and it consists of several rooms. The atmosphere is cosy, and the price is reasonable. Another bar I often visited is Yeah Aveiro, it's an Italian bar with interesting cocktails.

## 7.Challenges & best moment abroad

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

A large part of the Portuguese population speaks little or no English. Even the master students and professors speak little English, which means that there is a lot of improvisation involved. For example, you should try to understand a lot of the course with translation apps.

**What was your best memory abroad?**

I owe the best memories to the people I met here. COVID-19 played a smaller role in everyday life in Portugal than in the rest of Europe, allowing me to meet new people during the many activities (including parties).

My best memory is the experience of a local party: São Gonçálinho. This festival in honour of São Gonçálinho is celebrated for 4 or 5 days. The tradition is to throw cavaca's (traditional Portuguese recipe for dessert) from the chapel while hundreds of people try to catch them. This year it was celebrated smaller due to covid. Nevertheless, the whole city was packed with people. There was also an additional program with music and fireworks.

## 8. Contact details (optional)

<b>Is the reader allowed to contact the writer?</b>	yes <input type="checkbox"/>	no <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Name/e-mail</b>		