



WUR Goes Abroad

1. Student Information

Field of study in Wageningen	Environmental sciences
Study period exchange (dd/mm/yyyy)	23/08/2021 until 14/01/2022
Country (exchange)	Sweden
City (exchange)	Gothenburg
University (exchange)	University of Gothenburg
Faculty (exchange)	Earth Sciences

2. Motivation for exchange

Why did you choose to go on study exchange?

I wanted to experience studying in another country, in another city, at another university and discover new places and meet new people from different countries.

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

While searching for a university/country I discovered that universities in Scandinavia were more organised than most other countries in Europe. It was for example way easier to find which courses I could take as exchange student on websites of universities in Scandinavia. Besides, I have been to Sweden when I was younger and I really liked the country. There is so much nature there, what I really love. In addition to this, I wanted to experience living in a big(ger) city. Also, I heard from some people that went to e.g. Austria that some courses turned out to be in German and here I was sure the courses I took would be in English. Additionally to this, in Sweden basically everyone speaks English, whereas in some other European countries this is not the case. Another reason for me to go to Gothenburg was that I knew other students who went there and really liked it and I heard from them for example that you could quite easily get a room via the university. I thought this was really nice, because then I didn't have to worry about finding a room, without knowing anyone there. Lastly, the courses I found there seemed very interesting and included excursions. I had two courses of 15 credits and this is what I also liked, then you can focus on one course at a time.

3. Accessibility to reach destination

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

Go by train, it takes ofcourse longer then by plane but it is really doable and sustainable. Also, it is nice to travel through different countries and see the landscapes etc. Depending on where in the Netherlands you leave, it takes about 15 hours and the earlier you book the cheaper it is. I think tickets are available a month or maybe two months in advance.

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	<i>Field course in the Subarctic – Physical Geography and Ecology</i>	15	You learn about the subarctic landscapes and how climate change affects this. Also an excursion to Lapland is included.	4	It was a really nice and interesting course and very kind and enthusiastic teachers. I didn't know that much about this interesting area yet. Unfortunately the excursion was cancelled due to covid (but it was still very interesting). The first weeks we had lectures, we still had a few day excursions and we had a group project.
2	<i>Climate Change, a Geographical Perspective</i>	15	This is a broad course about climate change. But it mainly focuses on how e.g. weather (patterns) will change with ongoing climate change and why. (e.g. precipitation, atmospheric circulations etc.) The course includes an excursion to Spain.	4	I really enjoyed the topics covered and the different ways of teaching. We had lectures, literature seminars with discussions about trending climate topics, some computer labs, a group report and an excursion. Also the teacher was really kind and nice, only not very organised but this made me also feel relaxed instead of stressed.
3					
4					
5					
6					

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

Both courses consisted mainly of lectures with an exam, a group report and excursions. The climate change course also had literature seminars and computer labs. I think the lesson material was very interesting of both courses. The workload was not as high as I expected from 15 credit courses. The workload of the subarctic course was a bit higher then the other course, but still not very high. I think it was a perfect combination of study and being able to do (day) trips and discover the city and surroundings etc. Also the Spain excursion for the climate change course was really nice, we hiked on some mountains, visited a winery, some villages, a salt mine etc.

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 teachers were really kind and nice. They were even more approachable then in Wageningen. I think they knew the names of most students and the communication was very informal, which made it feel personal. You could easily ask questions etc. Most local students were really kind and included

me/us in conversations and stuff. Most of them were also really interested in us, where we came from, what we were doing, why we chose Sweden to go on exchange, what we thought of Sweden. So that was really nice to interact with them. Especially going on excursion to Spain with the climate change course made us close as a group.

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

The university had a library and study spots in the university itself. Also, I could get a room via the university in a big student dormitory from the student housing. At this student dormitory there were laundry rooms (which was free to do), a sports hall, sauna's which you could reserve for free, a cosy student café where you could get free coffee, tea and cookies and they had a lot of games you could play (and meet people) and lastly there was a free shop where you could get e.g. a pillow and blanket and other stuff. Also when you leave again you can bring the stuff you don't need anymore 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?)

From a certain date the rooms were available and you could just click on a room and then you got it (first come, first serve). So if you do this as soon as it is open, you will definitely get a room. I got a room at olofshojd, which is the biggest student housing in Gothenburg. You have your own (furnished) room and bathroom of about 18 squared metres and a shared kitchen with either 4 or 8 students. I payed around 380,- a month, so that is quite cheap for 18m2 and your own bathroom. The bathroom was pretty new and in the room itself was a bed, a desk + chair, lamps, a closet for clothes and another closet, a chair to relax and 2 smaller/coffee tables. So for Erasmus it's perfect, also because so many students live there as well.

Some friends also stayed in studio's (medicinaregatan). Those were containers and split into two rooms, a small bedroom and a small kitchen/living room. And ofcourse a (very small) bathroom. In total those container rooms were about 18 squared metres and you pay about 400,- a month for this. The only disadvantage of this was that they all had to buy literally everything, pans and pots, plates etc. There way less students lived, but all the students that lived there, were Erasmus students.

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

The Swedish culture is quite similar to the Dutch culture. There are only some small differences. For example the work-life balance is really good there. Free time and private life is very important, so they work relatively little in a week. Also for example when two parents expect a child, both parents can go on maternity leave for 8 months. Also the Swedish culture is very focused on the individual, so everyone takes responsibility. Which means that Swedes e.g. take care of public areas and goods, there is not that much trash on the streets for example. In addition, because of this focus on the individual, Swedes like to have their own space, they like to be on their own but also when you walk

through the streets or in a shop, keep a bit distance from people (which you should do anyway with covid). Lastly, Swedes like to have fika's, which is a coffee break tradition. You take the time to have a coffee or tea with friends or family to have some quality time together. It is very common that a refill for tea and coffee is included in cafés, so that's really nice!

One last thing, they have Swedish Krona instead of Euro's, mostly you can just pay with your Dutch bank card (and there are more places where you can only pay by card then where you can only pay cash, those places are very rare). 100 Krona is about 10 euro's so that is very easy.

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

This is a bit hard, but my room was about 120 euro's more per month. Also groceries were a bit more expensive, but I don't dare to say how much more expensive. And of course you have some more expenses because you do more trips, fika's etc.

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

To travel through the city and to university, I mostly used my bike, which I bought there and sold again. But the public transport is also really good, there are buses and trams and even ferry's to the islands at the coast are included in the public transport. For Gothenburg and the surroundings there is an app which is called: västtrafik, here you can look up connections and buy tickets. You can buy a 90 minute ticket (about 3,-), a 24 hour ticket (about 11,-), a month ticket (about 60,- for students) and a 3 month or year ticket (not sure about the prices). But as a student in Sweden you can apply for "mecenat" which is I kind of online card and app, where you get discount with at many shops and other things. When you have this app, you can buy the public transport month, 3 month or year ticket for the price of a youth ticket.

6. Free time

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

Must sees are the islands at the coast, visit at least one of them and hike around. Ofcourse just discover the city and all the areas. I also really enjoyed the city museum and art museum which are both free for students! Stora delsjön is a nice lake close by where you can hike around, swim or have a picknick. Also in the city there is a big botanical garden with a nature reserve behind it and there is the park Slottskogen where you can have a picknick, cycle/walk around and spot the animals (penguins, seals, reindeer, elks etc.). For the rest there is so much nature in Sweden and the close surroundings of Gothenburg, so just discover that. There are some longer distance hiking trails such as gotaleden and bohusleden, where I hiked parts of. If you have a tent it is also really nice to go wild camping and hike multiple days. To most nature areas you can easily travel by train or bus. I mostly went there on days off, in weekends and in free afternoons or mornings. Also, the amusement park Liseberg was really worth a visit.

Not so much in the close surroundings but definitely a must see is Lapland, you can either go there yourself or with time travels which is a travel organisation for student

trips, so you will definitely be with a group of students and do some nice activities there! Besides this, I also went to Stockholm and Copenhagen in the weekends which I really enjoyed. Both cities are really nice!

My advice: just do whatever you feel like and follow your heart!

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

I don't know what is in the travel guide and what not.

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

To go out I would definitely go to Yaki Da, when you go in before 22:00 it's free and drinks are half price. For restaurants I would just look on the internet, restaurants in Gothenburg don't have to be that expensive. There is for example the restaurant "Andrum" where you can have a vegetarian buffet for only 10,-. Also, next to the earth sciences department there is a really nice, relatively cheap sushi place with very kind staff (also good to get coffees in the lunch break).

7.Challenges & best moment abroad

What was a challenge you have experienced?

In the beginning I was a bit scared of not finding friends, not finding my way in the city, feeling lonely etc. But luckily this was all not the case, ofcourse you don't know the city in the beginning but you will very soon. I also joined ESN where I met lots of people and also at my courses and via via I met so many people. Ofcourse I felt lonely sometimes, but then I just called with friends at home. And we did so much stuff with friends, that it was not a very big problem.

What was your best memory abroad?

This is really hard to say, I have sooo many good memories. From smaller things such as Celebrating Christmas in a cute cottage on an island with beautiful clear sky and sun (and frozen sea), the many pretty sunsets and skies from viewing points, the game nights at the student café, eating pancakes and swimming in the lake and sea. To bigger things such as the excursion to Spain with a great group of people and the trip to Lapland, also with a really nice group, I have had a great time!

8. Contact details (optional)

Is the reader allowed to contact the writer?	yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no <input type="checkbox"/>
Name/e-mail	Soshanna Blaauw, soshanna@live.nl	