



# WUR Goes Abroad

## 1. Student Information

<b>Field of study in Wageningen</b>	International Land and Water Management
<b>Study period exchange (dd/mm/yyyy)</b>	16/09/2021 – 31/01/2021
<b>Country (exchange)</b>	Portugal
<b>City (exchange)</b>	Porto
<b>University (exchange)</b>	Universidade do Porto
<b>Faculty (exchange)</b>	Faculty of Science

## 2. Motivation for exchange

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

I wanted to experience living abroad for a while and meeting people from other nationalities. Furthermore, I wanted to improve my Portuguese.

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

The main reason was to learn the language but I also fell in love with the country during the two-week excursion through Portugal, which was part of my study program in Wageningen.

## 3. Accessibility to reach destination

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

Taking the plane is the best option. There are not many trains in Portugal, so it is almost impossible to get there by train from The Netherlands. The bus is possible but takes a couple of days.

## 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	Management of Water	6	Mainly about water quality. How organisms affect the quality of water and how to manage this properly.	4	Classes in Portuguese and some practical classes in Spanish. You have one excursion.
2	Management of Natural Resources	6	The importance of different natural resources for a country (mainly about Portugal) and how to manage them.	5	Classes are in Portuguese but you get a lot of support in English. Unlike the course Water Management, this course was followed by other international students. You have one excursion.
3	General Horticulture	6	What is horticulture? Why is it done? What are the benefits/downsides? Functioning of greenhouses, different ways of propagation, many examples from The Netherlands.	5	This course is taken outside Porto, at the Agrarian department of the faculty of science. I enjoyed it a lot because it was situated in a green, peaceful neighbourhood and the course contained many practical classes, including a small research project in a greenhouse. The teacher had done her PhD in Wageningen so the majority of classes were in English.
4	General Viticulture	6	Morphology of a vine, phenological stages of grapevine, how to prune, management of vineyard in relation to climatic factors.	5	This course is also taken outside Porto, at the Agrarian department of the faculty of science. One of the highlights of this course was the full-day excursion to the vineyards in the Douro Valley. Furthermore, there are many practical classes in a small vineyard next to the educational building. Classes are in Portuguese.
5					
6					

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

Theory classes usually took around 2-3 hours, practical classes 1-2 hours. All exams were 2 hours long. Furthermore, the exams were similar to the exams taken in Wageningen; parts multiple-choice, parts open questions and parts true/false questions with explanation. The course material was available on your personal page of the University. As almost all courses were taught in Portuguese, the workload was relatively high for me but compared to Wageningen University I would say the academic level is a little lower in Porto.

**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?)**

In Portugal, it is usual to call all teachers 'professor', so you don't even mention the teacher's surname. In general, there is a greater social distance between student and teacher compared to the WUR. However, I always felt comfortable asking questions and asking for (extra) help when needed.

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

In every faculty, there is a canteen where you can get your lunch for a good price. Furthermore, there are plenty of sports facilities and you can sign up for certain activities. Because of COVID, they also offered mental health support programs.

## 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?)**

When filling in all necessary documents, there is a possibility to sign up for a room in one of the university residences. This is the cheapest option. You can also find rooms on Idealista, Student at Home, Bquarto, and other verified websites. There are also advertisements on Facebook but you need to be careful with scams.

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

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

Room in university residences (usually a room in a shared hallway): around 160 euros/month  
Others: around 250-350 euros/month

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

You can purchase an Andante card (like an OV chip card) and use it for metro, bus, tram and train. Porto uses zones so the prices differ in what zone you are in and what zone you want to travel to. My major way of transportation was walking and taking a Bolt. This is like an Uber but way cheaper, sometimes even cheaper than taking the bus when sharing the Bolt with others. If you apply for a

room in one of the university residences, they place you somewhere close to your faculty so public transportation is not needed.

## 6. Free time

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

- Botanical garden
- Foz do Douro (area near the beach)
- Parque de Serralves
- Parque das Virtudes
- Sé do Porto
- Jardim do Morro (other side of river but best place to see the sunset)
- Palácio e Cristal

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

Praia de Leça da Palmeira (especially if you are interested in architecture)

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

Cordoaria is the central place where many students gather to have drinks in the evening. It is also the neighbourhood to party. If you want to experience some good traditional fish places, you can either go to Foz do Douro, Matosinhos or Vila Nova de Gaia. I would definitely recommend taking the train one day to Braga or going for a hike through National Park Gerês.

## 7.Challenges & best moment abroad

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

The language barrier. I did not expect that a big city like Porto has many non-English speaking residents. Although this was a challenge at first, it also became a way for me to improve my Portuguese, step out of my comfort zone and integrate more with the local people. Portuguese people may seem harsh and closed off at first impression but once you get to know them better, they are the most welcome and warm people.

**What was your best memory abroad?**

For sure making new (international) friends and spending lots of time with them. I did not encounter any other Dutch students during my mobility but I believe this is a good thing as you will be more open to meeting people from other nationalities. Not only is it interesting and enriching to learn about and fuse into other cultures, it is also a way to broaden your network. At the moment of writing, I have friends in Brazil, Italy, Poland, Germany, Spain. All of them I met in Porto.

## 8. Contact details (optional)

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