



WUR Goes Abroad

1. Student Information

Field of study in Wageningen	Food Technology
Study period exchange (dd/mm/yyyy)	4-1-2022 until 20-4-2022
Country (exchange)	Canada
City (exchange)	Edmonton
University (exchange)	University of Alberta
Faculty (exchange)	Faculty of Agriculture, Life & Environmental Sciences

2. Motivation for exchange

Why did you choose to go on study exchange?

I wanted to experience how it would be like to study outside of the Netherlands to get a full experience of student life. Moreover, I was interested in meeting people from all over the world. In Wageningen, that is possible, however I didn't necessarily make time for this as I already had my friend group. I felt like going on exchange would be a good way to open myself to new experiences with all different cultures.

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

When I was a little kid, I was already intrigued by Canada. When finishing highschool, I hesitated between going to university directly or doing a gap year to Canada. However, at that time I felt like I was too young. But the thought never left my mind. Canada has such beautiful nature that I had to see that. Moreover, Canada is seen as a very open country with lots of different cultures, so I felt like meeting people from all over the world would be best possible in Canada.

I chose for the University of Alberta because of its location. Edmonton is not a well known city, however it is so close to the Rocky Mountains that it is very easy to visit. Besides, Edmonton is a more northern located city. So, you are exposed to a whole new climate. It was very nice to live in such a snowy climate for a long period of time. At first I was a bit afraid of how cold it was going to be. But once I arrived in Edmonton, it was not as bad as the temperatures sound. The snow had such a beauty in it, it felt like I was walking through winter wonder land every day. I never went on ski vacation, so I was not used to all the snow but it was truly incredible.

3. Accessibility to reach destination

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

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	Advanced study of food fermentations	6	You study many different routes of fermentations (bacterial, yeasts and fungal). After this very theoretical part, all knowledge was applied in lectures on different food products (cheese, wine, meats). You also need to make a report and give a presentation on a food product.	5	The theoretical part was a bit intense in the beginning but once it was applied to food products, it made much more sense. There were about 5 different (free) food tastings, that were a lot of fun.
2	Lipid Science	6	First you get an introduction on many lipid types. Afterwards, more processes withing plants on creating the different lipids are introduced. You also need to write an report and give a presentation on lipids in whichever way you want. And there is a practical part	2	The course itself was fine. However, I thought the course would be food related but it was plant related. This made it less interesting to me. I did have the freedom to write my report and presentation on lipids in food products.
3	Renewable Biomaterials	6	In this course, you are first introduced to many ways that fuels, plastics etc are produced. Afterwards, many ways to create renewable variants to fuels and plastics were taught. For this course, you also need to give a presentation and make a report. There is also a practical part.	3	I chose this course to broaden my knowledge. I found it very interesting. Again, you could write the report on anything renewable related so I did it on renewable food packaging. I felt it was nice to have that much freedom. Unfortunately, the practicals were online due to covid.
4					
5					
6					

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

Due to covid, the first half of the semester was online. The second half was both online and offline depending on the course. I felt like the academic level was lower than I'm used to at the WUR. There is examination in 3 ways: quizzes, mid-terms and final exams. The quizzes only covered a few lectures each, which was a nice way to keep up with the lectures. The mid-term covered the first half of the semester, this was supposed to be off-line but due to covid, I had all mid-terms online. The final exams covered either the whole semester or only the second part of the semester, depending on the course. I felt like the examination was less than I am used to, as you only have 1-3 lectures a week instead of (almost every day). However, the reports were bigger than I am used to, especially since I needed to do it all individually.

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?)

For me, the culture was very open. The lecturers encouraged everyone to have private email contact. If the lecture was online and you'd be a bit early in the meeting, you could just talk to your lecturer about life. After the lectures, there was often time to discuss the material with the lecturer or with other students. However, I did have less interaction with local students in my classes due to no group work. At the WUR, there is often a groupwork aspect, which I didn't have in my courses of University of Alberta. Some of my friends did have groupwork, so it probably depends on the chosen courses.

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

In every residency, there are laundry facilities, common lounges (even if you have a living room in your own house), (small) kitchen, elevator and cleaning services of common areas. Moreover, you get access to the big gym at campus, and smaller gyms (24/7) in residence buildings. If wanted, you could also buy a meal plan, however I didn't do this as I like cooking. I also didn't know many people that had it as it was quite pricy.

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?)

You need to sign up as soon as you get your login access to get your first pick. There are many different housing types offered by the university, so often there is housing for everyone (in my experience). I lived in graduate residence (which wasn't my first pick). This is an apartment complex where you share your kitchen, bathroom and living room with one other graduate student. If you know someone that is going to live there as well, you could ask if you can be housemates (this counts for other residences as well). I didn't have a housemate the whole time I was there, but it was quite a big apartment so it would still be comfortable. Other residence options that are available are corridors with a private room and bathroom but a shared kitchen, or a bigger apartment that you'd share with 4-6 students. All rooms are furnished with a bed (incl mattress), desk, chair and closet. My apartment also had a couch, salon and dinner table, and chairs, and a (breakfast) bar with bar chairs. The kitchen was equipped with a fridge, freezer, oven

and a sink. However, all pans and other cooking equipment needed to be bought. This needs to be done every semester. So I recommend asking around the first day if people from the previous semester left some stuff. Or, if you have contact with people that are there in the semester before you, ask if they could leave their stuff at a student that stays for a longer period of time.

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

Most of my close friends were also exchange students, so not Canadian. So I don't have close experience with the Canadians.

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

The renting price is much higher than I was used to in the Netherlands (~750 euro/month depending on which type of room you have).

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

At arrival, you get a card which you can use for free public transport withing Edmonton. This is very nice. The residences are at the campus, so you can just walk (in snowboots) to uni. If needed, I used uber which was usually cheaper than the uber prices in the Netherlands. You can also travel to other big cities/the rockies by bus, which could be quite cheap (~90 CAD), or more expensive, depending on your location.

6. Free time

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

The rocky mountains, I really liked Jasper, Banff, Golden and Canmore. But especially Jasper was beautiful as the Elk just walk around in the city. The city is very small and cute. It was like from a movie. But to see all the beautiful lakes, you should visit Banff, which is also breath-taking, but just more populated and touristic. My exchange was from January till April, however I travelled around till the beginning of June. Around this time, the lakes started melting, So I was still able to see emerald lake defrosted. Which was very beautiful. Sadly, I couldn't see Maligne lake (my favourite lake) defrosted as it is the biggest one in the Canadian Rocky's.

If it is possible, I recommend visiting Vancouver island as well. It could be quite rainy. I was there in the middle of May, and I didn't have any rain. But friends of mine that were a week earlier only had rain, so it depends. But it is very beautiful.

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

By far, my favourite activity was dog-sledding in Canmore, but it is quite pricy. Also, if you like hiking, I recommend doing a summit to one of the tops of the mountains. My friends and I did a summit to the peak of Ha-ling, which was very beautiful.

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

You really need to visit the Pint (on Wednesdays). This is a chicken wings restaurant. On Wednesdays, they have a wing deal, so you pay less. It is also a lot of fun to visit the Pint when there is an ice hockey game. I also recommend to go to one of the Ice hockey games. I went twice, and it was such a fun experience, very different from the Dutch sports experiences.

7.Challenges & best moment abroad

What was a challenge you have experienced?

When everybody had a lot of free time, I needed to finish my reports. Which got a little lonely as I lived alone. But I went to the library often, and my friends still joined.

What was your best memory abroad?

Making little trips to the Rockies with all of my friends. We would just rent a car with a few people, book a hostel and just go to the Rockies (it's like a 4 hour drive to Jasper/Banff). It felt very free.

One weekend, we went to spot the northern lights after returning from a weekend away. Seeing that was surreal.

I will also never forget that me and some other friends learned how to ski in the Rockies. And of course, my dog sledding experience is one of the best things I ever did.

After the semester I went to Hawaii for a week with some friends, which is also an experience that I will never forget. Afterwards, with 5 others, I went on a month-long roadtrip through the USA and Canada. That was also truly amazing.

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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