WUR Goes Abroad

1. Student Information

Field of study in Wageningen	MSc Food Technology
Study period exchange (dd/mm/yyyy)	02-2022 until 06-2022
Country (exchange)	Austria
City (exchange)	Vienna
University (exchange)	BOKU
Faculty (exchange)	-

2. Motivation for exchange

Why did you choose to go on study exchange?

To experience what it's like to live abroad, to get outside of my comfort zone, to make new friends, to improve my German, and to extend my studies with a year to 'make up' for the years of student life we missed due to Covid-19.

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

The friendly atmosphere of the city (it's the most liveable city in the world), the type of university (very comparable to WUR) and the language.

3. Accessibility to reach destination

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

Take the train! There is a direct night train going from Amsterdam/Utrecht/Arnhem. If you book early it's only €29 and you can take unlimited luggage with you. Trains during the day are also comfortable and you can take a bike with you.

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	Facilitating change for sustainable development	3	About making the food system more sustainable and resilient. Nice group discussions and supportive lecturer.	4	
2	Field trip - viticulture and oenology	3	Field trip to wine areas in Austria (3 days).	4	It's in German and costs €45
3	Food authenticity practical course	3	Lab course about authenticity of foods (meat). Quite boring but not much work to get 3 ECTS.	2	
4	German for Science (BOKU specific topics) - Course B (B2+)	2	German course about BOKU topics (sustainability related). Same nice lecturer as intensive course.	5	
5	Intensive German Refresher Course - moderate advanced	3	2 week German course before the start of the semester. The lecturer is really nice. Also very nice to get to know people before the start of the semester! I made close friends here :)	5	Costs €250 but you can get ~€100 back from the ÖH
6	Intercultural competence - Acting effectively in an international environment	3	Course about intercultural communication and working in an international environment. Lectures are a bit 'childish' but the group project was nice.	3	
7	Multivariate statistics	3	Course about multivariate statistical analyses. I especially improved my R skills. Quite difficult course but lecturer was always willing to help me.	4	
8	National and international food safety authorities	3	Seminar course about food safet autorities. Quite repetitive and therefore a bit boring (also because it was online) but not much work to get 3 ECTS.	3	
9	Project management	3	Very useful and practical course. Nice lecturer and relevant group work.	5	
10	World wines and viticulture	3	About international wine styles. Very informative and relevant group work. Quite high workload (report, presentation and exam).	5	

How is the study formalized? (E.g. study forms, academic level, examination, workload, lesson material)
In my opinion, the workload and level of the courses is lower than at the WUR. You have a lot of flexibility in your planning. It's difficult though to plan your courses: many lectures overlap.

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 culture of the university is similar to the WUR. Lecturers are very approachable, although the first contact is often a bit formal.

What does the university offer the student additionally? (E.g. Catering, sports facilities, laundry facilities?)
You can have lunch at the Mensa. The food is good but a bit expensive (€6) for what you get. There is a university sports centre (USI) which offers sports courses, also for students from the other Viennese universities. They offer a wide variety of courses. You have to sign up early for this, some courses were full in 2 minutes! The BOKU also organises seminars/ discussion evenings, but some of these are only in German.

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?)

In general there are two options: student dorms or a 'WG' (shared apartment). OEaD is a useful website for finding a room in a dorm. For a room in a WG you can use Facebook or WG gesucht.

I lived in a studio in Viennabase19 and I was really happy with my accommodation. It was a 15min walk to uni and I became good friends with the other Erasmus students in this building. It was furnished (a bit basic) but in a modern state.

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

There isn't a huge culture difference with the Netherlands. Viennese people are not so good at smalltalk. They seem a bit reserved at first but once you get to know them better they are friendly and open. Viennese people are very neat; the city is much cleaner than eg. Amsterdam and Vienna is very safe.

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

I paid €450 for my studio. It's a bit more expensive than Wageningen but for a capital city I think the prices are fair.

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

Buy a semester ticket!! You pay €75 for this and you can take all types of public transport within Vienna for 5 months. The public transport in Vienna is truly amazing.

I also bought the ÖBB vorteilscard (€19) which gives you 50% discount on trainrides in Austria.

Biking is also possible, you can buy a second hand bike via Willhaben (the Austrian 'Marktplaats'). It is safe to bike in Vienna, although you have to be careful because there is always a lot of traffic!

6. Free time

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

I could fill a whole page with tips, but here are my absolute favourites:

Kahlenberg, the wineries and Krapfenwaldlbad, Brunnenmarkt, Hundertwasserhaus, swimming in the (Alte) Donau, the many museums Vienna has. And of course the first district and Schönbrunn. Restaurants/cafes I recommend are: Weinstube Josefstadt, Cafe Jelinek and burg.ring1.

Vienna is also an excellent location to explore nearby cities such as Salzburg, Graz, Budapest, Prague, Ljubljana and Bratislava. Especially Graz was one of the biggest surprises to me! It's also fun to bike to Bratislava (~75km) and take the train back.

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

On the first Sunday of the months some museums have free entrance. Donauinsel is nice for walking/running/biking and in June there is Donauinselfest (3-day free festival).

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

Go out and explore! Something small such as taking a stroll through the city centre or your neighbourhood can be surprising. Also, it's of course nice to go on weekend trips, but don't forget to explore Vienna itself. ESN also organises some activities like city tours or daytrips in Austria.

7.Challenges & best moment abroad

What was a challenge you have experienced?

Changing my courses/schedule so often. I had a lot of overlapping lectures and two of my courses got cancelled, so I ended up changing courses until May.

What was your best memory abroad?

A bit cliché, but the lovely friends that I made! Before the start of the semester I was a bit nervous; will I meet nice people, what will I do in my free time, will I feel at home etc.? It's so nice to look back to my exchange and realising all these things went so naturally.

8. Contact details (optional)

Is the reader allowed to contact the writer?	yes ☒	no ☐
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