



WUR Goes Abroad

1. Student Information

Field of study in Wageningen	Bsc International Land and Water Management
Study period exchange (dd/mm/yyyy)	14-02-2022 until 30-06-2022
Country (exchange)	Austria
City (exchange)	Vienna
University (exchange)	BOKU (University of Natural Resource Management)
Faculty (exchange)	X

2. Motivation for exchange

Why did you choose to go on study exchange?

I really wanted to have an experience to study abroad, meet people from other countries and learn a new language.

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

The reason I chose Vienna is because of its central location in Europe. I had never been so that part of Europe, so having a 'base' in Vienna made it easy to do trips to the countries around and to the Alps. Another reason is that I wanted to improve my German. At the BOKU I had the opportunity to do two German language courses, of which one was before the semester started and the other one during the semester.

3. Accessibility to reach destination

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

Train! There is a direct Night train that goes from Amsterdam/Utrecht/Arnhem to Vienna. Book in advance and don't forget to apply for the Green travel Grant of 50 euros!

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>912328 Agroforestry in Mountain Regions</i>	3	Detailed lectures about the different aspects of agroforestry. It doesn't really focus on mountain regions in particular but more on agroforestry as a whole. At the end there is a role play between different stakeholders and an exam.	4	The course has two teachers. One of them is very nice and engaged with the students. The other one knows a lot but his lectures are really boring. Both teachers are quite chaotic so guidelines for the role play are non-existent.
2	<i>913338 Natural resource management in mountain forests</i>	4	This course is mostly about forestry in Austria. It says that no pre-knowledge is needed, but as I have no background in forestry, I did struggle with this course! However, the two two-day excursions to the Alps in the end made up for everything. This was the course I learned the most from. Assessment is the excursions, a report and a exam.	4	The teachers are experts in forestry but as they are quite old, they are quite formal and deaf during the lectures. During the excursions they loosened up a bit.
3	<i>933303 European regulatory framework for organic production</i>	3	This course consists of a lot of European policy making. It is given in two full days and an exam in the same week.	3	-
4	<i>833103 Agroecology</i>	3	This course is a basic Bsc course about agroecology. The topics range from the climate to ecology, pests and demographics. Assessment is 1 exam that covers all three parts.	3	This course is given only in German It consists of 15 lectures of 4 hours It is way more work than 3 ECTS but useful if you want to learn German vocabulary.
5	<i>912337 Biodiversity and Conservation of Mountain Forests</i>	2	All the basics of biodiversity are repeated in this course. Consists of lectures and two discussion sessions in small groups.	3	

			Assessment is an exam		
6	<i>735336 Intercultural Communication</i>	3	Very international course. The course lectures are basically an introduction to sociology but there is also a lot of talking about different cultures. Moreover, all students have to prepare a role play about doing business effectively in a certain country. Assessment is two presentations and a longer paper.	5	Teacher is a bit chaotic but very nice and funny. He is really interested in his students' culture.
7	<i>816342 Possible impacts of climate change on water resources</i>	3	The name is a very good description of the course. All aspects of the impact of climate change on water resources are covered (in mountains, in oceans, in the ground, in forests, etc). Most organised course I had at the BOKU. Exam at the end	5	There are several lecturers; the female lecturer is the best lecturer I've ever had.
8	<i>933312 Interdisciplinary excursion on organic agriculture</i>	2	We didn't do the excursion as it says on BOKU Online because of Covid. Instead we organised our own excursion to several organic farms in Austria. Assessment based on a self-edited video.	3	-
10	<i>120004 Intensive German refresher course (Intermediate)</i>	3*	One of my favourite courses. It consists of 10 half days of German classes with a lot of discussions and time to talk to other students. I would recommend everyone to take this course as you will make friends here for the rest of your Erasmus. This course starts two weeks before the semester. For Dutch natives they always recommend the Intermediate course instead of the beginner. No exam	5	*This course is NOT credited by the WUR
9	<i>120034 German for science B2+ (BOKU specific topics)</i>	2*	By far my favourite course. It is basically a continuation of the	5	*This course is NOT credited by the WUR

			Refresher course but a bit more focused on science related topics. The teacher is very nice and don't worry that you're German is not good enough, because it probably is good enough. I had this course with most of my friends that I met during the refresher course.		
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How is the study formalized? (E.g. study forms, academic level, examination, workload, lesson material)

I took mostly Msc courses despite being a Bsc student and I had no issues with the level, except for the Natural Resource Management in Mountain forests course. I would say the academic level is slightly lower than at the WUR.

Another difference is that courses are very small compared to the WUR, so 2 or 3 ECTS are no exception. This can be very annoying when setting up your schedule because as a result there is a lot of overlapping between courses. Don't pin yourself too much on the courses on your initial LA, because there will be a lot of changes.

Workload differs a lot between the courses. Most examination is with exams or presentations. However, examination is a lot less formal than at the WUR and it could be that you have to do an exam without having to register for it or having the choice between a written and an oral exam.

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 general, I would say that the lecturers are a bit more formal and therefore less approachable than at the WUR. However, I think this has to do a lot with the fact that many lecturers I had were male and already far passed their retirement age. Other people had young lecturers instead, so it also depends a bit on the courses you choose.

I didn't have much interaction with Austrian students as most of my courses were in English and I assume the Austrian students took the German equivalent. Most BSc courses are in German, but as a BSc exchange student you can take as much MSc courses as you want, as long as you meet the entry requirements.

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

There is a really good Mensa (cafeteria) in the cellar of the Tüwi building. This is not the general Mensa of the university which is on the ground floor but it is down the stairs (outside), in the cellar. They offer only vegetarian and vegan food for lunch for only 5,70 euros (when you register your BOKU card at the Mensa office). I don't know about other facilities because most things were closed as a result of Covid.

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?)

Finding a room in Vienna is a lot easier than in the Netherlands! I don't know anyone who didn't have a room well in advance of the start of the semester. There are many options, most people I know got their room via <https://www.wg-gesucht.de/wg-zimmer-in-Wien.163.0.1.0.html> . This is mostly shared housing via private renters.

I stayed at Base19, a student dormitory with a big garden, which is about 10 min walking from BOKU. I signed up through their own website (so not OEAD) and almost instantly got a room. You can also sign up through the OEAD, but these buildings are further from the university and in my opinion less nice than Base19, but many students also get a room through here.

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

I would say that there is not much difference in culture between Austria and the Netherlands. Maybe Austrians are more private than Dutch people, but again, this really depends on the people you meet. The Austrian accent can be hard to understand in rural parts of Austria when you know a bit of German. In Vienna the accent is not that strong and you will get used to it quickly. Also, most people in the city speak pretty good English.

There are also enough options for vegetarians/vegans!

Keep in mind to always have cash on you as there are still many places where it says "Nur Bar" (cash only), like cafes or bakeries.

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

I paid around 360 euros for a 12sqm room, including my own bathroom and a shared kitchen. I would say prices are comparable to Wageningen.

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

As a student you can get a "semester-ticket" for 75 euros. This ticket is valid in all public transportation in the entire city for the entire semester. The public transportation system is very extensive and efficient. Some of my friends had a bike, but I didn't and that was also fine. There are 3 buslines that stop in front of the university.

For Austrian trains outside of Vienna, you can buy a "Vorteilskarte" for 19 euros. This will give you a 50% discount on all trains of the ÖBB (the Austrian rail services). In their app you can easily book trains to e.g. Salzburg, Graz, the Alps, Bratislava or Ljubljana. For Prague and Budapest I recommend to book through the local train operators or take the Flixbus.

6. Free time

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

Vienna has a lot of beautiful museums like Albertina and the Sisi museum. The city also has countless cafes for "Kaffee und Kuchen".

As I wrote, when you choose to go to Vienna, you can do a lot of city trips. Capitals like Prague, Ljubljana, Bratislava, Budapest, Zagreb are within half a day by train or bus. But also the Alps and Austrian cities are so close! In winter you can be in a skiing area within 1.5 hours.

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

The rooftop bar of the IKEA at Westbahnhof at sunset 😊!

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

I would really recommend the burger restaurant "Hank and Frank", close to Westbahnhof. Best (vegan) burger place I have ever been to!
Loco bar is famous among the Erasmus students because of the cheap drinks. But there are lots of fun bars along the Donau canal and around the Mariahilferstrasse. On warm summer nights, lots of people chill and party on the Donau Insel.

7.Challenges & best moment abroad

What was a challenge you have experienced?

The bureaucracy at the BOKU. It is quite a challenge to register yourself before the semester starts. There is a very extensive registration process in a program called Mobility Online before you come to Vienna. Then, you have register in person before you can access the online environment of the university and thus register for courses. Make sure to arrive at least two weeks before the start of the semester (start of semester is around 1st of March) to register. Some people arrived just before the start of the semester, when most courses were already full!

It is also not clear sometimes whom to contact when you have a problem and some teachers reply very late.

What was your best memory abroad?

Watching Eurovision with 10+ nationalities, all the dinner nights in the garden at the Base19 and our hiking trip in Kranskja Gora in Slovenia!

8. Contact details (optional)

Is the reader allowed to contact the writer?	yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no <input type="checkbox"/>
Name/e-mail	pipsenders@gmail.com	

