



WUR Goes Abroad

1. Student Information

Field of study in Wageningen	Social Sciences
Study period exchange (dd/mm/yyyy)	01-09-2022 until 21-12-2022
Country (exchange)	Italy
City (exchange)	Florence
University (exchange)	Università degli Studi di Firenze
Faculty (exchange)	Economics and management

2. Motivation for exchange

Why did you choose to go on study exchange?

I wanted to take the opportunity as I thought it was the easiest way to go live and study abroad. I wanted to experience living abroad and I wanted to see new cultures and learn new things.

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

I chose Italy because I already liked the country for the food, culture and climate. I wanted to experience how it would be to live in a country where people have a very different mindset than in the Netherlands.

3. Accessibility to reach destination

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

I went by plane from the Netherlands to Pisa and then took the train to Florence. It was a long journey, but flying straight to Florence is quite expensive. If you want to travel sustainably, you can take the train (through Germany) or the Flixbus.

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	Demography and Tourism	6	You learn the basics of demography in terms of mathematics and theory. In the second part of the course you apply the changing demography to the tourism sector, e.g. how demography influences tourism and how to manage this.	5	
2	Destination Management	9	You learn the importance of destination marketing and management in different sectors of the tourism industry. You learn new terms and study how different world events and developments influence destination images and marketing.	2	
3	Economic History of Globalisation	6	You study the most important features of world history, but the focus is on the economy and how events influenced the economy. Examples are diseases, the energy transition during the industrialisation, the Great Depression and the Golden Standard.	4	
4	Economic History of Tourism	9	You learn about the history of tourism from the Grand Tour until now. You study the most important events and aspects that have shaped tourism to what it is today. The focus is on the economic history, but you also study non-economic factors.	4	
5					
6					

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

Lectures are the most important form of study. I have had very few group projects and presentations. All courses mentioned are master courses and as a bachelor student it was fairly easy to pass all of them. All courses had final written examination at the end of the course and the workload was very doable. Lesson material consisted mainly of lecture slides, books and papers.

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?)

You can not sign up for courses, only for exams. This means that you can either be an attending or non-attending student in a course. There are different rules and study materials for non-attending students and even if you are an attending student, attendance is not always registered. Compared to WUR, the university was very chaotic in terms of information, registration, communication etc. It bothered me a lot. Administration offices and lecturers took a very long time to respond to emails, if they even responded at all and the English level of both the lecturers and other staff members was not always up to par. I noticed that Erasmus students were usually friends with other Erasmus students, as most Italian students did not speak English well or did not want to speak English. They preferred to stay within their culture.

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

There is a canteen in which you can eat lunch and dinner. You need to get a canteen card to be able to eat here or pay in cash. Also, you can only use the library with a library card. You can only get both these cards after your enrolment has been completed and this can take a long time.

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?)

I used Housinganywhere.com to find a house, but you have to be early in order to find affordable housing. The University will not help you find a place to live until the last week of the summer break. Most rooms in Florence are shared rooms with one or two other people. You pay twice as much for a private room and landlords are not always the easiest people. I think the average price for a room is 500 euros, but depending on location and size, this can be a lot higher.

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

In Italy pasta really is the main food type. It is quite difficult to find other affordable cuisines in the supermarket. They eat pasta for lunch and often for dinner too. For breakfast Italians go to a local bakery to buy a croissant and a cup of coffee and at the end of the afternoon they have an aperitivo (drinks with some snacks). One important thing to know is that traffic is very dangerous in Italy. Drivers – and especially cyclists – do not obey to the rules and you will constant honking when you are outside. People will not stop for you at a crosswalk unless you just start walking and the bus will not stop at

the bus stop unless you wave at the driver to tell him to stop. It is very common for Italians to be late and they take a lot of time to get something done. You should not expect punctuality or that something gets done right on the first try.

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

It is more expensive to rent a room in Italy than in Wageningen. Of course, it also depends on location and the kind of room. Public transport is cheaper than in the Netherlands and food prices in the supermarket are pretty much the same. As a student, you can get a lot discount for museums, exhibitions and other activities, so it is not as expensive as in the Netherlands.

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

In Florence there are two tram lines and they are usually on time. There are also a lot of bus lines, but you should not expect them to show up on time (if they show up at all). The cheapest option to travel is to buy tickets at the tram stops, which you can use for both the tram and the bus. If you buy tickets on the bus, they are more expensive and only usable for the bus. You can also get a monthly, 3-monthly or 6-monthly ticket for about 33 euros per month. You can use this ticket on urban trams and buses and you will need a tax ID to be able to get one. From all over the city there are buses that go to the university, but buses are very unreliable. It is easier to take the tram as far as possible and walk the last 10-15 minutes. Some students have a bike or use city bikes to travel around town, but it is quite dangerous as drivers are not used to cyclists as they are in the Netherlands and there are no rules for cyclists.

6. Free time

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

You should join a student organisation. They organise fairly cheap trips and excursions for the whole group. As Florence is pretty central, it is easy to do some day trips to Rome, Bologna, Venice, Pisa, Cinque Terre and the countryside of Tuscany. For longer trips, you can travel to Naples and the Amalfi Coast, Sicily, Puglia or Milan. However, you should buy train tickets for outside Tuscany on time as prices increase over time.

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

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

For clubs and bars you have to pay an entrance fee, but if you have a student card from one of the student associations (AEGEE, ESN, IC etc.), you get a discount. For restaurants, try to stay away from the city centre as prices are very high because of tourists. Outside of the centre prices can be half as high as in the centre. When eating in a restaurant, they charge you coperto for the use of plates and for service, so you are not at all obliged to tip.

7.Challenges & best moment abroad

What was a challenge you have experienced?

The Italian mindset was the biggest challenge. Everything happens very slowly and everything takes time. The bureaucracy really is a thing there. For example, it took me three hours to get a monthly bus ticket and it took the university a month to get me admitted.

What was your best memory abroad?

A trip to Naples with the friends I made in Florence. We saw Naples, slept in a hostel for the first time, went to Pompeii, climbed the Vesuvius and saw the Amalfi Coast. Above all, we got to know each other very well!

8. Contact details (optional)

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