



# WUR Goes Abroad

## 1. Student Information

<b>Field of study in Wageningen</b>	Bachelor Soil, water & atmosphere
<b>Study period exchange (dd/mm/yyyy)</b>	4-2-2022 until 11-7-2022
<b>Country (exchange)</b>	Austria
<b>City (exchange)</b>	Graz
<b>University (exchange)</b>	University of Graz
<b>Faculty (exchange)</b>	Faculty of Environmental Systems Sciences area of concentration: Geography and faculty of Geoscience

## 2. Motivation for exchange

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

I choose to go studying abroad, because I wanted to see what is like to study in a different country, but mostly I wanted to study abroad to learn new people.

I also still lived at my parents and wanted to live at least for a period of time on my own.

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

I choose Austria, because I wanted to study in a German speaking country and take my courses in German. I also wanted to go to Austria, because of the nature, the culture, and the ability to go skiing and hiking.

The choose for this university was, because it was in Austria, and it offered courses that were in my field of interest.

I also choose this city, because of the nice city and the easy reachability of the lower alps.

## 3. Accessibility to reach destination

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

The destination is reachable by several ways of transportation, e.g. train and airplane.

My parents have brought me to the destination because I had to bring my ski gear and some other stuff. On the return journey I made use of a train connection. It was a train from Graz to Vienna, Vienna to Frankfurt and than from Frankfurt to Utrecht. However, it is also possible to take a night train directly from Amsterdam (Utrecht or Arnhem) to Vienna, and than to Graz. It will take about 13h30.

It is also possible to take a direct flight from Amsterdam Schiphol to Graz airport, however this connection is not operating every day in low season. Also flying from Amsterdam Schiphol to Vienna airport and than taking a train or bus to Graz is possible.

Overall, I prefer taking the train because it is relaxing and relatively easy.

## 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	Übungen zu Einführung Klimasystem und Klimawandel	2	Course is in German It is a course that deals with some physical and mathematical problems that are dealt with in the corresponding lecture course.	4	Very kind professor. You can get bonus points when you are presenting the exercise you made in front of the class.
2	Einführung Klimasystem und Klimawandel	3	Course is in German In this course the basics of the earths climate system are dealt with, and the climate change.	3	Professor is a bit inpatient and during the exam you need to give the answer in the way he wants to hear it.
3	Mensch und Umwelt: Geosphäre	3	Course is in German This will course will deal with all the spheres on the earth e.g. Hydrosphere, Lithosphere, Atmosphere, Pedosphere, Ecosphere and Cryosphere. It is an basic course to give first year students background knowledge on for example land forms and land patterns or on the hydrological cycle.	4	Good course, very interesting. In Wageningen I already learned a lot of this topic so no need to learn a lot. However when you are not well know in this field of area it is a course where a lot needs to be learned by heart.
4	Geographische Exkursion (Schnee und Lawinen)	3	German taught. With this excursion course we went to tirol (Area of Silvretta) and Voralberg to learn about observing potential avalanches. It was basically skiing, doing a skitour, on purpose releasing a avalanche with an explosion. We had to write a small paper about how to organise a ski	5	Amazing excursion, also the aprè ski was amazing 😊. If you like skiing and possibly also off-piste choose this course immediately.

			tour according to the avalanche protocol.		
5	Geographie des Hochgebirges	3	German taught. This course will teach the basics on how the alps are formed geologically and geomorphologically. Also the social geography is an part of the course, which explains why at certain places people live, why there is alpinism or train trails.	5	Very lovely professor, however at first he was a bit difficult to understand due to his accent, however I got used to this. He provided us with a good document with lecture notes. The exam is a oral exam, which I am not used to in Wageningen, however was a good experience.
6	Hydrogeologische Methoden	3	Taught in German. It is a combination of a practical and theoretical course. The course will teach how to use hydrogeology theory in practice. There needed to be made some calculations and about this an paper needed to be written.	4	Good course, very practical to get the ah-Erlebnis and not only know things in theory but also use them in Practice.
	Geologie der Alpen	3	Taught in German As the name states the whole geology of the alps will be dealt with. It will deal with the 3 alpine orogeneses (also from around 700 Ma till 2.6 Ma) It will describe how the currently visible forms and formations are formed and where they originate from.	4	Very interesting course, however it was way more difficult than I expected. Or it was a high effort to learn all this theory.  Professor should have been with retirement, however, to excited to give up. That is also why he has a strong styeran accent.
	Geographische Exkursion (Karst)	3	Taught in German. We went to a local karst cave system and the professor explained about the system, both about the hydrogeological side as the social geographical side. We hade to make a group poster about the gained knowledge.	3	good excursion and nice to be in the field with a professor.

	Boundary layer climates	4	First in English then in German. Master course This course explains the relative basics of the boundary layer system. E.g. radiation balance, Urban heat island, interaction to cryosphere.	3	Okay course, prof cancelled the classes relatively often. For a master course not that difficult.
	Snow and ice Processes	4	Taught in English. Master course The course is about e.g. glaciers; how they move, what their properties are, the current situation around the world. Also about snow metamorphosis, the boundary layer above the snowpack.	4	Very interesting course about glaciers, snow and ice processes. Very kind professor with knowhow.
	Exkursion Umweltgeowissenschaften	1	This is an excursion to a area where in 2012 a large mud flood happened, to a construction pit for a hydrological energy plant in the river Mur, near graz. And to the drink water supply plant of Graz. We had to write a small paper about how the different fields of study need to work together.	3	Was a bit confused by the expectations of the paper and the excursion itself. In the end it worked out fine.

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

Study forms are combination of writing some papers, a group project, a tutorial like class, but mostly it is taught in lectures.

Academic level is at a good level, comparable to graz

Eximation: Either a paper, oral exam or a written exam

Workload: During the semester relatively relaxed at the and it was very high. Because all the exams were in like 2 weeks.

Lesson material: Most of the time only the lecture slides, 1 course had lecture notes.

**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 Austria there is still a strong hierarchy, but I did not really encounter this. The professors were quite relaxed and were easily approachable, before or after the lectures. Not a big difference to the WUR.

Engagement to local students seems a bit hard, but that can be caused by a language barrier, however when I dared to approach them it worked out to be kind people. Still it is quite hard to get into a friend group than they are quite distant.

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

The university itself offers not a big amount of stuff, still they have a good exchange team helping you when there are questions. Also there is a possibility to take part in sport courses for a reduced amount of money.

## 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?)**

There are plenty of options to find a room, the university has good options on their website. The rate variate between ca. €250 to €500,-.

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

It is a west-european country, therefore not large difference compared to the Netherlands. To keep in mind on Sundays all the shops are closed, and the shops close around 7 or 8 in the evenings. The culture is a bit more formal, so professors or elderly people are also expecting this.

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

I am unable to give a comparison, because I didn't have a room in Wageningen.

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

The public transport is quite punctual, so delays are not the frequent. In the city it is easy to use a bike, but the public transport is also good useable.

I bought a so called "semester top ticket vor der Steiermark" this a pass for public transport in the whole Bundesland Styria. With this ticket one can use all the public transport for without extra fees, it cost around €160.

I travelled to university by foot or by bike.

## 6. Free time

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

Well Austria is quite well-known country, so the most well-known cities like Salzburg, Vienna, Innsbruck and of course Hallstatt. Also, Schladming or Flachau are good cities for going skiing or hiking in Summer.

Graz is quite centered located, meaning that cities in other countries are also easily reachable, by either train or flibus, countries like; Slovenia, Hungary, Tschech Republic, Slovakia, Croatia, Italy, Germany

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

Well a lot is of course mentioned in travel guides, but going to the Plabutsch or the view platform on the Buchkogel is worth a visit especially during sunset.

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

You will find it out quite easily, there are so many nice places. The 'Weinstuben' are places where you can get typical Austrian/Styrian food. The Bausatz lokalen are also very popular by students, and there are 13 different of them in Graz.

From Graz it is also quite easily to go for nice hikes in the area, just take a train in the direction of Bruck a/d Mur and you are in a very lovely area.

Also the Schöckl is the home mountain (Hausberg) of Graz, it is the Mountain you have to go to.

Going skiing is also easy, it takes around 2.5 hours to get to a good skiing area, called Schladming.

With the Public transport ticket, you will not pay anything for the train trip.

## 7.Challenges & best moment abroad

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

The biggest challenge was in the beginning getting use to have in the courses in German, but after 2 or 3 weeks you get use to it and than it makes a lot of fun learning a third language.

**What was your best memory abroad?**

Best memory is going on the ski excursion with the university and releasing an avalanche and than afterwards doing aprè-ski with the professors 😊.

## 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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