



WUR Goes Abroad

1. Student Information

Field of study in Wageningen	Landscape Architecture and Spatial Planning
Study period exchange (dd/mm/yyyy)	30-08-2022 until 16-12-2022
Country (exchange)	Canada
City (exchange)	Guelph
University (exchange)	University of Guelph
Faculty (exchange)	Landscape Architecture

2. Motivation for exchange

Why did you choose to go on study exchange?

Firstly, many people I knew recommended an exchange, as they said it taught them a lot (not just academically). Furthermore, I love to learn about other peoples cultures and sharing cultures, which is why I already knew a few years ago that when I had the possibility I wanted to become an exchange student. Finally, I am considering doing a master abroad too, so I figured an exchange was a good way to test if I would be able to thrive in another country as well.

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

I know from personal experience that it takes me some time to adapt to an environment that is different than what I'm used to, which is why I wanted to go on an exchange to a country with a culture that I was at least somewhat familiar with already. I have been on vacation to Canada twice before, which is how I ended up choosing this country. Furthermore, I wanted to choose a university that offered interesting courses in my field of study (landscape architecture) that would be different from the ones offered here in Wageningen, but at the same time offered the possibility to take courses outside of my personal specialisation too.

3. Accessibility to reach destination

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

As it's Canada, you cannot really go there any other way than by plane. I had the amazing opportunity to go on a roadtrip with my family after and they dropped me off at Guelph, but when I had to go back home I took the public transport and went by train, which was also okay. There is a train from the airport to Toronto's main station (Union), and from there a train runs to Guelph about 4 times a day.

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	Contemporary Canadian Art (ARTH3010)	6	Reviewing different contemporary Canadian artists, their work and it's meaning.	5	Really lovely course, I personally believe art is a very big part of culture so to understand art is to understand the society too.
2	Plants in the Landscape (LARC2240)	6	Learning common native and exotic plant species and their design characteristics.	4	As a landscape architect a useful course, you just learn a lot of trees and shrubs. My favourite thing was the weekly walk where we looked at the discussed plants.
3	Site Engineering (LARC2410)	6	Learning about site grading and technical calculations that have to do with site elevation.	4	Again, a very useful course. Though it involves some difficult technical calculations, the course is made as accessible as possible.
4	Fundamentals of Environmental Geology (ENVS2240)	6	Learning about geological processes and rock formation processes.	4	A nice thing about this course are the weekly labs, where you get to see many features discussed in the lectures, just as the fieldtrip.
5	Meteorology and Climatology (ENVS2030)	6	Learning about important factors for weather formation, weather systems and predicting weather.	5	Though all teachers I had were lovely, I found the two teachers I had for this course the nicest. Besides that, it was really interesting to learn about weather and climate processes.

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

In my opinion, there is a relatively large amount of self-study in Canadian education. In my home degree in Wageningen I'm used to a lot of contact hours, so for me it was a bit of a change. I thought the workload was fine, with some efficient working I still had plenty of time left for other things. The matter of examination really differed per course, for one of my courses I have had multiple small assignments and for one of my other courses I just had a few big ones with a big course weight.

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?)

I found the lecturers very friendly. During lecture, it sometimes seemed a bit formal, but all lecturers were actually very friendly and welcoming if you approached them with a question and were open for a nice chat. The atmosphere around the lecture seemed a bit more serious than in Wageningen, I was used to having a chat with my fellow students before the start of the lecture, but in Canada the classroom was usually quiet as everyone was just focussing on themselves. However, after approaching a few people, I found that there are always a few students that are up for a chat anyway!

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

The university offers many facilities to students. I was pleasantly surprised by the vast amount of things offered at the university. There are many resources and groups you can reach out to for example with various kind of problems, whether it's motivation, mental health, or adapting to Canadian life. Besides that, Guelph has been the best university in Ontario for years when it comes to campus catering. There are different places where you can get food (also alternative options if you have dietary wishes) and it's all very good! The campus also has different sports facilities. As a student, you already have free access to the recreational hours on these facilities and if you want to use the gym you can get an additional membership. Besides that, the university also has several teams competing in the university leagues in different sports and as a student, you can visit these matches for free.

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?)

Guelph offers on-campus residence for first-year students and exchange students. Good to know is that therefore you will not find older Canadian students living on campus, they live off-campus in the rest of the city of Guelph (but of course you see them during class hours on campus). However, residence is a nice option to not have to deal with the stress of finding a place to live. I would recommend signing up for West-Residence as a housing complex, this is where most exchange students are placed so it has a really nice atmosphere with a lot of like-minded people.

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

I think the biggest difference in culture is the density of the country and the mindset that comes with it. In the Netherlands, everything is close to each other, whereas in Canada things are more spaced-out. Because of this, the country is also more car-reliant and you can notice that as a pedestrian too. Furthermore, eating-out culture is also way more prominent in Canada. In the Netherlands, we are much more used to cooking our own meals most of the time, in Canada people are much more used to getting takeaway, or for example getting a meal plan and eat almost all their meals in the campus restaurants.

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

I think it is maybe a little bit more expensive than Wageningen, but not crazily more expensive. The difference is mostly that you have to pay quite a large sum of money for half a year and in Wageningen you pay per month. Besides that, it is good to know that campus residence rooms come with basic furniture, but you have to get all other household items yourself (bedlinen, towels, cutlery, pans, etc.).

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

Something lovely about Guelph public transport is that as a student of the university, all busses in the city of Guelph are free with your student ID. If you want to go outside of Guelph, you probably want to get a Presto card to use on the GO transport. This is the name of the public transport provider of the entire greater Toronto area. There is a train running to Toronto as I mentioned before, but they also have multiple bus lines that can take you there or to other bigger towns in the area.

6. Free time

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

Of course Toronto is relatively close and that is definitely worth a visit. There are many nice places to go, if you're into sport I would definitely recommend going to an official sports match of one of Toronto's major league teams. There are also lovely museums, and the Kensington area is a really nice place to just walk around and do some thrift shopping. However, do not underestimate Guelph itself, the city has quite a charm to it! If you know where to go, there are some really lovely places in the area. Of course, the bus is free so you can always hop on a random bus and just explore the city. The Rockwood Conservation Area is quite close to Guelph and reachable by GO bus and it is a lovely park to take a hike sometime. Or already on the university campus, you can find the Art Gallery of Guelph, which is a small museum with interesting modern art exhibitions (and it's free!)

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

I would definitely recommend visiting the Aberfoyle Antiques Market if you are there in the right season; it is the city next to Guelph, and it is Canada's largest antiques market. Even if you are not that into antiques, the atmosphere of the place is just really nice and it's incredible how large it is! Besides that it's also easily reachable by GO bus from Guelph.

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

Just the Guelph city centre itself is really nice if you want to go out. There are many different places you can go to, depending on what kind of evening you want to have. There are several nice restaurants for example, multiple nice clubs (personally, I think Palace was my favourite), pubs (Brother's Brewing Company has a really nice atmosphere for example and a lovely selection of local craft beers) and other things. Several locations host pubquizzes and karaoke nights throughout the week (the campus bar, The Brass Taps, has a really fun trivia night every Tuesday evening and for karaoke we went to Bad Luck Bar almost every Sunday).

7.Challenges & best moment abroad

What was a challenge you have experienced?

After the first month, I did start to miss my friends and family a bit. Sometimes I was feeling a bit down in the evening, but because of the time difference I could not reach them at these moments and I was not sure whether my bond with my new friends was already close enough. However, it turns out that everyone is going through the same things of course so I was able to find plenty of support with my exchange friends.

What was your best memory abroad?

We used to go to a karaoke bar downtown almost every Sunday with quite a big group of internationals. The exact composition of the group changed every week, but there were a few people that were almost always there. The bar was just a regular bar so there were also some other older local people around. Just the experience of getting together and having fun with such a diverse group every week was truly lovely.

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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