



# WUR Goes Abroad

## 1. Student Information

<b>Field of study in Wageningen</b>	Environmental sciences, BSc Soil Water Atmosphere
<b>Study period exchange (dd/mm/yyyy)</b>	01.03.2022 until 01.07.2022
<b>Country (exchange)</b>	Austria
<b>City (exchange)</b>	Innsbruck
<b>University (exchange)</b>	Universität Innsbruck (LFU)
<b>Faculty (exchange)</b>	Atmospheric and Cryospheric sciences

## 2. Motivation for exchange

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

I wanted to experience how it would be to live abroad and this was the perfect opportunity to do that. With an Erasmus study exchange you'll get to know people from all over Europe really easily and you can explore the local culture. I wanted to go on an adventure, broaden my horizon and challenge myself.

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

First of all the mountains, seeing them every day just made me happy and gave lots of possibilities for outdoor sports. The combination of mountains and the university makes Innsbruck a very young, vibrant and sporty city, if you like to be outdoors it's perfect for you. Also the courses appealed to me and indeed I liked them.

## 3. Accessibility to reach destination

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

I was lucky that my father brought me by car (count on a ~12 hour car journey), so that I could bring my bike and skis etc. The other option is to take the direct nighttrain to Innsbruck, which can be very cost effective if you book in advance.

## 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	Numerical methods for models in atmospheric science	4	You learn about different methods to discretise numerical problems	4	Later I found out it is similar to the course 'Water and Air Flow Numerical Techniques' in Wageningen so you might want to consider that. The lectures might seem complicated because there is a lot of math involved but as soon as you do exercises you will understand.
2	Field course in atmospheric sciences	7.5	Topic will change every couple of years, my year was the first year we looked at the FAIR site (eddy covariance measurements etc.), you will work together with a group of 4-5 students and a teacher to do an experiment in the field.	4	Our group actually did very little field work; we started with reading lots of literature and later on looked at data analysis. However, I did really like the interaction with the group and the teacher so I did learn a lot.
3	The Cryosphere in the Climate System	5	Focus on glaciers and the processes involved, coupling to the climate system	4	The workload was high during some periods because multiple practicals/ assignments were running parallel but it was a very nice course to understand a lot of the processes in glaciers without a lot of pre-knowledge
4	Visualizing Scientific Data	3	You learn how you can make better figures in science	5	I would definitely recommend this course, it is different than what you can do in Wageningen and you will learn a lot of useful stuff you can use later in your study/career. Even more so, the teacher is really enthusiastic and you can choose your own project you like.
5	Advanced Weather Forecasting	3.5	You go deeper into a range of topics in weather forecasting like data driven forecasts, föhn, convection and air mass boundaries	3	This was not the topic I personally enjoyed the most and I felt like I had less pre-knowledge compared to my fellow students. Every week you will watch recorded lectures, do an assignment with a fellow student and discuss the assignment in class. I ends with an oral exam and two

					individual assignments. I did like working on the assignments and the teacher was nice.
6	Numerical Models in Glaciology	3	You will step by step build your own Shallow Ice Approximation model	3	The lectures were online and at 8:15 on Monday morning so that was not very motivating and the deadline was in the summer holiday, but personally I did like the content.
7	Warm Season Weather Briefing	1.5	A week long you will make and present a daily weather forecast	-	Think whether you'll be able to do this. I dropped it because it is a lot of work and after you'll need to catch up with all the work you missed in that week. You will need to familiarise yourself with mountain meteorology and how to do a forecast. You need to do this alone and with little guidance compared to 'Atmospheric practical' at WUR

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

Be aware, the date of the end of the semester only means that lectures will be finished after that date, you can still have exams and deadlines after that date, so in February if you come in the Wintersemester or July in the Sommersemester. The grading system is a scale from 5 to 1, so 1 being the best grade (sehr gut), 2 (gut), 3 (befriedigend) and 4 (genügend) are also pass marks, 5 will be a fail (nicht genügend). My courses were small scale lectures (~15 people), which were mostly a combination of lecture, tutorial and practical. Apart from those contact hours you'll have to do self-study, in my case mostly assignments alone, in duo's or in a group. The self-study part will cost more time than in Wageningen and will also need more independence from teachers. So I spent more hours studying than in Wageningen, but the academic level was similar. Just as in Wageningen, you don't need to buy the books, so can study from the PowerPoints, papers and online study material. Examination will be based on the assignments, and for some courses there was also a final exam. A grade of a course can consists of only one assessment.

**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 will have to do more on your own compared to the WUR as explained above, you are expected to do assignments on your own, in your own time, but teachers are very approachable. Luckily, the faculty is very small so naturally you will work together with the other students and help each other out. Local students were very welcoming because the faculty is really small. You can join the STV Atmosphärenwissenschaften page on OLAT for announcements on activities and Stammtisch from the study association.

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

Next to the main university is a Mensa where you can get lunch. Similar to the Bongerd the university has the USI, where you can do multiple courses, from football to skateboarding and from skiing to canyoning so plenty of possibilities.

## 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?)**

As soon as you receive the Welcome in Innsbruck email, you can sign up at OeAD for housing, you can give your top 3 for preferred buildings and then you will hear whether you get a room. I signed up mid October and got my first choice the next day, but I heard from others that it was more difficult. I lived at Panorama Fürstenweg and liked it there. I could also recommend Technikerstraße (all exchange students live on the same corridor and share a big kitchen) and Höttinger Au (very close to main university, most floors have a lot of party's, but I heard 4<sup>th</sup> floor is pretty quiet). My room was €350 per month, housing will be a bit more expensive than in Wageningen but still doable. It is quite common to have a room shared with another student, but most people have their own room with only the kitchen and bathroom shared.

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

I did not experience a big culture difference with Austria or my European friends. There are some differences. Austria is still a bit more conservative than the Netherlands, so be prepared to carry cash money with you, shops being closed on Sunday and clubs being more sexist than in the Netherlands. Definitely try some Tirolean dishes. I am vegetarian and also in Austria this is becoming easier.

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

Housing a bit more expensive, groceries similar to the Netherlands, alcoholic beverages cheaper, and apart from that it will very much depend on what you do in your free time. USI courses have a price per course (for me it was ~ €35 per course I think), ESN offers a lot of activities with prices similar to Dutch student life. If you will be there for a whole year (or sell/buy it midway in February/March if you are there for only one semester) it can be interesting to buy a Freizeitticket. It is very expensive (~€600) but will give you lots of possibilities for skiing tickets, swimming etc. I bought day tickets for skiing, which mostly were ~€30 to €35 per day if you bring your students card of UIBK (Universität Innsbruck)

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

Buying/bringing a bike is essential in my opinion. Although you are surrounded by large mountains, Innsbruck itself is completely flat and the infrastructure for bikes is good for a foreign city. Innsbruck is a bigger city than Wageningen but you can reach everything by bike and it gives you a lot of flexibility. I saw that the ÖH (student union) is starting a project with free Stadträder for students so that should be worth looking into. For weekend trips (mostly skiing and hiking) I bought a semester ticket for €190, which gave unlimited use of all public transport in Tirol (busses, trams and trains).

## 6. Free time

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

The city centre of Innsbruck is compact, but very nice to explore. Going up to Nordkette at some point, you can take the cable car or hike up. In general, the mountains give lots of possibilities for exploring and outdoor sports. I liked to ski and hike, but also trailrunning, climbing (Kletterzentrum or outdoors) and mountainbiking are very popular in Innsbruck. I think a must do's are sleeping at a mountain hut and the Adlerweg from Hochzirl Bahnhof to the Solsteinhaus. Innsbruck has a big station so there are lots of possibilities to take a train or bus but for some more remote destinations it's nice to know people with cars.

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

No idea what's in the travel guide but I would definitely recommend wintersports in winter, I liked Axamer Lizum, Schlick and Gurgl (finding someone with a car would be nice for the last one) the most and also trying out snowboarding and cross country skiing instead of only normal skiing was very enjoyable. The easter break (2 weeks) is a good opportunity to go a bit further. In Innsbruck I would recommend the Sill Schlufte, the botanical garden, Hofgarten park and around Innsbruck Möserer See and Piburger See. Also I recommend to take part in the tradition of Figln(skiing on very small ski's on the ungroomed left over snow/firn/slush) from Nordkette on the 1<sup>st</sup> of April.

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

Mustache for drinks in the evening and coffee in the morning, Tribaun for many different types of beer, Fischerhäusl for traditional Austrian food, die Pizzeria for pizza's, Wohnzimmer each Monday evening ESN drink, Konditorei Munding for cakes, La Copa – La Cabana for karaoke on Wednesday.

## 7.Challenges & best moment abroad

### What was a challenge you have experienced?

The workload of university was a lot higher than at WUR, which meant less time for exploring as I would have liked to, but I think the biggest challenge was leaving the city at the end :(

### What was your best memory abroad?

Being part of a international friend group felt very good, you will meet people and get close to them very soon. My best memory was probably our trip to the Dolomites in the Easter break. We were there on the off-season and just had the snowy mountains to ourselves. We did a off-track snowshoe hike and stayed in a cabin and it was really magical.

## 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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