



WUR Goes Abroad

1. Student Information

Field of study in Wageningen	Forest and Nature Conservation
Study period exchange (dd/mm/yyyy)	01-10-2022 until 18-12-2022
Country (exchange)	United Kingdom
City (exchange)	Lancaster
University (exchange)	Lancaster University
Faculty (exchange)	Geography

2. Motivation for exchange

Why did you choose to go on study exchange?

To meet new people, and to experience what it is like to live abroad on my own. This felt like a great opportunity to try this all out. Besides, I wanted to improve my English language skills, and I wanted to gain some experience in living and studying in a different country/university.

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

I wanted to go to an English-speaking country or Scandinavia. I had never been to the UK before, therefore I was really excited to go there. I chose Lancaster because it offered some great courses in the geography department, slightly different from the courses in Wageningen. Another reason I chose Lancaster is because of the campus life. Everything can be found on campus; accommodation, restaurants, supermarkets, a sports centre, a cinema, barbers etc. Also, the collegiate system at Lancaster played an important role in my choice of this university.

3. Accessibility to reach destination

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

I travelled by plane to Manchester (it can be quite expensive so try to book it as soon as possible). The university arranged a shuttle service from the airport to the university for £30. On my way home I took the train to the airport, which is cheaper than the shuttle service but a little less comfortable with all your luggage.

Another possibility is to get here by train. However, when I was in the UK, there were a lot of train strikes, so this wasn't much of an option for me.

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	Lakes, Rivers, Estuaries	7.5	Gives a general overview of the three different types of water bodies. Includes threats to the waterbodies and solutions to these threats.	5	Well-structured, gives you a good overview of lakes, rivers and estuaries.
2	Urban Infrastructure in a Changing World	7.5	About what infrastructure is, how it has changed over the years, and how we perceive infrastructure.	4	Interesting topics, but a lot of reading materials.
3	Coral Reef Ecology	7.5	About the threats to coral reefs and the wildlife coral reefs support.	4	Includes a nice field trip SeaLife in Blackpool. Lots of practicals and workshops
4					
5					
6					

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

The university is more focused on self-study. Every week I had approximately 7-8 contact hours. You are expected to read articles and write on your own papers in the meantime. The academic level and workload are quite similar to WUR I think. The examination is in summer. However, exchange students get alternative assignments as a replacement for summer examinations. For me, these were mostly essays 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?)

Lecturers are easily approachable, you can just send them an email or ask them something after a lecture. In my courses there were about 50-60 students, of which only a few were also in Lancaster on exchange. Engagement with local students is possible, but you just have to start talking to them. Most of them study in Lancaster for 3 (or more) years so they already know their fellow students for a longer time.

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

You can do your laundry on campus, however, it is quite expensive (£2.90 for washing and £1.80 for drying). Also, there are not a lot of washing machines on campus, so I wouldn't recommend doing your laundry at the weekends as most washing machines are in use then.

There is a big, new sports centre on campus. You can buy a Bronze, Silver or Gold membership. I got a silver membership (about £100), which means I could go to the sports centre any time I wanted to go. The Bronze membership is cheaper, but then you're only allowed to go there in the mornings. With the Gold membership, you can access some other rooms, but I don't exactly know what, and it is even more expensive than the silver membership.

There are a few restaurants on campus. Sultans is the best place after a night out. It is quite cheap and they give out free bottles of water after a night out (really nice :)

There are two supermarkets on campus; Spar and Central. The prices are of course a little higher here compared to the bigger supermarkets in town, but you can find most important things here. When you want to buy more groceries, I recommend going into town. On Wednesday, there is a free bus going to Sainsbury's, which is one of the biggest supermarkets in Lancaster.

There are a lot of sports societies you can join. In the Welcome Week there is a fair where you can see all societies and you can sign up for one you like. Besides, every college has its own sports teams, which you can join as well.

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 apply for the university, they send you an email about the accommodation. The university arranges the accommodation for you. However, if you want to look for your own accommodation, you can do that as well.

You can send a few preferences to the university. I was assigned to a room on campus, which was perfect for me. I lived with 25 flatmates (all exchange students), and we shared two kitchens and two bathrooms. I had my own sink in my room. I really liked living with so many international people. As we were all exchange students, we all wanted to visit many places in the UK and make the most of our short time there.

The rent is a little more expensive than what I'm used to in Wageningen. I paid around £450 per month. However, my room in Lancaster was smaller than my room in Wageningen.

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

First the most obvious ones. As you probably know, in the UK you pay with pounds, not with euros (but you can just pay by card almost everywhere). Other than that, driving on the left side is a big difference.

When you meet people (even if you don't know them), they often ask; are you all right or how are you? People say "excuses me" or "sorry" a lot. In general, British people are really friendly and polite and extremely helpful when you ask them something.

At night and at the weekends (even in the mornings), they drink a lot of alcohol (not everyone of course), so this can be quite a change. I wouldn't recommend travelling by train on a Friday or Saturday night around the bigger cities in the area, when you don't like to be surrounded by drunk British people. However, it is quite an experience.

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

As I already said, the rent is more expensive than in Wageningen. Prices for groceries in town are about the same as in the Netherlands. The cheapest option is to go to Aldi/Lidl. However, if you live on campus, it is more convenient to go to the supermarkets on campus, but unfortunately they are a bit more expensive.

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

As I lived on campus, I didn't buy a bus card, because I didn't need to travel by bus a lot. If you don't live on campus, a bus card might be a good option. I paid for every trip to the city centre. The costs for a return ticket from the university to the city centre is about £3.40, but this is about to get cheaper.

After a night out, we sometimes took a taxi. A taxi drive from the city centre to the university is approximately £10. So when you can split this with others, this is a really good price.

When you are planning to travel by train a lot, I can recommend the Railcard. You can buy a railcard for £30 and with this card you get a 30% discount on every train ticket you book. For me this was really worth it, but if you are not planning to travel a lot by train, this may not be worth the money for you.

6. Free time

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

Lancaster itself is a beautiful old city, with lots of things to do. The Castle, Ashton Memorial and Dalton Square are all things you need to see while staying there.

Liverpool and Manchester are both really nice cities to go to. As it is quite close to Lancaster (1-1.5 hours by train) you can go there for just a day (or multiple days of course).

Edinburgh is also a beautiful city. It takes a little longer time to reach (2.5 hours). For that reason, we stayed there for the weekend. While we were there, we also went on a tour through the Highlands of Scotland, and we visited the Loch Ness and Glen Coe (the tour takes about 12 hours, but I can really recommend it if you have some time).

Lake District is a must-visit while you are in Lancaster. It takes approximately an hour to reach by train/bus. You can make some beautiful hikes in the national park. If you are not really into hiking you can go to one of the bigger cities in the area, like Windermere. There are some boat tours starting in Windermere with great views over the lakes and mountains.

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

If you are into football, I can definitely recommend visiting one of the big football clubs in the area. We went to visit Manchester City against Chelsea in the Etihad Stadium (I think the ticket prices at City are cheaper compared to Manchester United and Liverpool). It is great to experience the English football culture in real life.

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

Sugar House and Vibe are the main clubs in Lancaster. I preferred Vibe as I had the best nights out there.

Most of the time, I had dinner with my flatmates on campus. However, when you want to go to a restaurant, Bella Italia is a good and affordable place. The Herbarium is a good option for lunch.

7.Challenges & best moment abroad

What was a challenge you have experienced?

The exchange period is quite short compared to other exchange semesters, so it was a little hard to fit everything I wanted to do in this semester. However, I think I managed to do most things I wanted to do.

I can also recommend to bring a credit card, because most things from the university can only be paid with a credit card.

What was your best memory abroad?

I have made lots of great memories so it is hard to choose. The trip to Loch Ness might be the best of them all. With a group of friends we went a night out in Edinburgh, and the next day we left really early in the morning for Loch Ness. We had a hard time during the bus drive, but as soon as we arrived in the Highlands of Scotland, it was so worth it.

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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