



WUR Goes Abroad

1. Student Information

Field of study in Wageningen	Landscape Architecture & Planning
Study period exchange (dd/mm/yyyy)	15/08/2022 until 23/01/2023
Country (exchange)	Sweden
City (exchange)	Linköping
University (exchange)	LiU
Faculty (exchange)	Arts and Sciences

2. Motivation for exchange

Why did you choose to go on study exchange?

I choose to do an exchange during my Master due to a few reasons. First, I wanted to extend my study time a bit, especially because I felt like I had missed out on student life during the pandemic. And of course, next to this, I was excited to live in a different country and city and discover its culture, people, geography, etc.

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

I knew I wanted to go to Scandinavia, but as I had already been on vacation to Norway, I decided to only apply for Swedish or Finnish universities. Then my choice was a mix of available course options, as well as the location of the city. Most importantly, Linköping offered courses in my field, which was what I wanted to do. Also, the city is easy to reach from the Netherlands, since it is in the South of Sweden and even has an airport with direct connections to Amsterdam. Other reasons were that Linköping is a middle-sized city, which I believed would be good for student life. I was also interested to see what it is like to live in a semi small city.

3. Accessibility to reach destination

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

The fastest and most convenient option is for sure flying from Amsterdam to Linköping. I flew back to the Netherlands once and the whole trip (door to door) took me only 5 hours. This is also the most expensive option though, and also not very eco-friendly. Another flight option is going to Stockholm Arlanda, these flights are usually cheaper, but the total travel time is way longer as you need to take a bus or train to get to Linköping. At the end of my exchange, I took a train from Linköping to Arnhem. This was convenient as I had a lot of luggage (2 suitcases and 2 bags) and there are no luggage limits on trains. Also, when booked in advance the price is similar to those of flights (about 100 euros). I had three train changes in Copenhagen, Hamburg and Duisburg, and none of my trains were delayed so it went very well. The downside is that it takes up to 15 hours. There is also a night train to Hamburg, which is very nice and can be a good alternative. Last, my parents drove from Arnhem to Linköping by car, which is a good option if you own a car. The split up the drive into two days, so it's quite long. Also, you have to pay fees to take ferries or use bridges. Parking fees in Linköping are also quite high, so take that in mind.

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	Foodscapes in Urban and Regional Planning	7.5	How to integrate food into planning	3	The course is almost completely led by (online) guest lectures and old employees of the WUR.
2	Critical Perspectives on Planning for Health	7.5	The intersection of health and planning	5	
3	Planning and Public Administration	7.5	Governance and social theories	1	
4	Strategic Planning of Urban Climate Transition	7.5	Recommendations for integrating climate adaptation and mitigation into municipal policies	4	

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

I was doing Master courses. For each of these courses, I had to write a paper, which was the main grade. Next to that, attendance at seminars were mandatory. At these seminars you have to come up with questions and discuss them, which was new to me. I liked them during some of the courses, especially when we were in really small groups of only 5 students.

At the beginning of the course (first 3 weeks), I usually had to read a lot. Then, there was more time to work on assignments (last 2 weeks).

For the papers I received a grade, which was from a range of A to F. For all papers I got an A, which is excellent and the highest grade you can get. For the seminars you get a pass-fail. I think the academic level is quite similar to the Netherlands, but you get higher grades.

My courses at the WUR are way more practical than the ones at LiU. The courses at LiU are more abstract, on a higher level, and more about theories.

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?)

The lectures are very social and laid-back. It is common to address them by their first name. It is even less hierarchical than at the WUR. The Swedish students usually are really at ease with their teaches and talk with them, also about more personal matters. I felt like the Swedish students were open and talkative.

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

The university campus itself has many nice buildings to study at, in particular the Studenthuset. These buildings also have cheap coffee and pastries. However, there are only expensive canteens, and there is a little convenience store on the Campus. A supermarket is quite far away.

The campus has a sports facility, where you can follow group lessons and do fitness. This facility has a good price for half a year. Per month it is quite expensive though.

The student housing has laundry services.

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 an exchange student, you can opt for a room offered by the LiU. If you register early, this will work out. If you are late, you can get a room at Heimstaden. This also works really well. Other than this, you can look on Facebook for private rooms in the city centre.

The rooms offered by university and Heimstaden are around 350/400 euros. For this you get a big room (20 m²) with your own bathroom. There is also a common room and kitchen. You can also rent other rooms, such as ping pong room and a yoga room. The

greatest though are the sauna's, which you can rent for free. There are also many laundry rooms which you have to reserve through an app.

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

Contrary to what I thought, Swedes are quite easy to approach and generally really kind and nice people. In particular students are easy to talk to. However, becoming friends with them is difficult, though this could also be because I was only in the country for half a year.

Maybe the biggest culture difference was eating a warm lunch (there are microwaves at all university buildings). When visiting someone's house, it is very common to take off your shoes when you enter the home.

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

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

Bicycle infrastructure is really good in Linköping, so both the university and the city are reachable by bike. There are also bus lines in the city and regionally. You can buy tickets in an app. Taking a taxi is common but quite expensive if you are alone. From Linköping, you can take trains or busses to other big Swedish cities. Usually the trains are more expensive, but always check the SJ website because there are cheap offers as well. I travelled to the north of Sweden for only 30 euros. Otherwise, you can take the bus, which is quite cheap but is usually a bit more time-costly than the train.

6. Free time

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

My favourite spots are:

- Viggeby: nature reserve, great for hiking, camping and swimming. You can get there by car and bus.
- Norrköping: city with cool architecture close to Linköping. You can take the campus bus here for free.
- Omberg Ecopark: forest and hill next to the enormous Vattern lake. You can hike, swim, and camp here. You need to have a car to get here.
- Gamla Linköping: old-center of Linköping with museums. Dahlbergs Café is here, which has amazing hot chocolate. The neighborhood is nice to stroll through, probably mostly in summer as well in winter (with snow or close to Christmas).
- Babettes: the best bakery/café in Linköping, which is great for chilling but also for studying.

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

- Ovre Glottern: sauna in the forest next to a lake. Can be booked through the website of Norrköping's municipality. It is quite amazing so I can really recommend it. It is nice during all seasons. You need a car to get here. There is a shelter to sleep at, so you could also walk there and sleep there.
- Centralkonditori Vaderstad: this is a cosy bakery/café with amazing pastries and lunch options. I would advise to combine this with a visit to Omberg.

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

Eating out in Sweden can be really expensive, but there are some nice restaurants with comparable prices to the Netherlands (10-15 euros for a meal). My favourites are Ölstugan (bar + restaurant), Mocca Deli (restaurant), KK (student bar), VillerValla (student bar), Little Tokyo (sushi), Khai Tai (curry and sushi in Ryd). Beer is usually quite expensive so most people have pre-drinks at home. There are also after work deals (until 19) with cheaper food and drinks.

7.Challenges & best moment abroad

What was a challenge you have experienced?

I was struggling a bit with the Swedish health care centre. There was a little bit of a language barrier and the waiting times for seeing a doctor are way longer than in the Netherlands (I had to wait 1.5 to 2 weeks for an appointment).

What was your best memory abroad?

One day I went to the Vattern lake with one friend. This is a huge lake and therefore pretty impressive. On this day, it was sunny but really windy. My friend has to study so she stayed in the car to work there. I went on a little walk on my own along the lake. This is one of my favourite moment because I felt so free and alive. It felt like a big accomplishment for me to be there on my own, as I was walking in this amazing scenery with rushing waves and wind through my hair. The landscape of Sweden, where there is so many endless forests and enormous lakes, really impressed me. It is usually quiet when you are outside in Sweden and you barely come across people. I really appreciate the quietness and calmness of the country.

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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