



WUR Goes Abroad

1. Student Information

Field of study in Wageningen	Animal Sciences
Study period exchange (dd/mm/yyyy)	14-09-2023 until 05-02-2023
Country (exchange)	Czech Republic
City (exchange)	Prague
University (exchange)	CZU
Faculty (exchange)	FTZ

2. Motivation for exchange

Why did you choose to go on study exchange?

In our study program they really support and recommend to go on exchange to broaden your horizon. Since this is the opportunity of a life time to go to a different country, learn the culture and meet lots of amazing people (and of course with a grant!), I could not decline.

It is something I found really scary, but exciting at the same time. I am trying to do more things outside of my comfort zone, this was the perfect challenge.

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

At first I thought it was a little random to go to the Czech Republic. But I was looking at all the courses at different universities, since for me it is important to study the things I enjoy. I found this wildlife program at CZU. Something with wildlife conservation, management and/or ecology is something I really want to do in the future. This program was perfect for me and apparently unique in the whole of Europe! That is the main reason.

Then, I realized that Prague would also be perfect for me. I have always wanted to live in a big city and the capital of Czech Republic so very beautiful! I literally fell in love.

3. Accessibility to reach destination

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

Take the public transport from the airport to your accommodation. It is cheap, easy and safe! Don't forget to validate your ticket.

Prague is also easily reached with the train or bus for a more sustainable option.

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	Small mammal biology and conservation	3	You learn about a few different specific animals (eg. Echidna, gum eaters, sengi's, Vancouver marmot etc.) and their biology, behaviour and some conservation.	5	This probably was one of my favourite courses. It was not very hard, but really interesting. Each lecture, the teacher mostly told an interesting story about each animal and all of their important characteristics. Different from any wur course I have ever had, but I think a good addition to get more general knowledge. Definitely recommend!
2	Game ranching	5	You learn about the importance of keeping wild animals as a meat source, how to do this and why. The teacher talks about a different animal each lecture (zebra, buffalo, rhino etc.) and their important characteristic, threats, biology etc. You also need to do a project where you design your own game ranch.	4	It was a nice course to get an overview about many different African mammals. At first I had no idea that this course was mainly about using wild animals as meat. I don't know what I expected, but this wasn't it. Still, I would recommend the course. The focus is not really on this to be honest, but more about the positive impact of keeping these animals and what this does for conservation. The teacher was a little bit chaotic, but also really nice and easy going.
3	Animal diversity conservation	3	You learn about the red list and endangered animal and what is important in writing a conservation plan. You also need to make a plan of your own.	4	Too be honest, this course was very small with only a few lectures, but you had to work a lot on your own conservation plan, which was quite challenging at times. It was interesting and the teacher was great! (she has very cute dogs that she brings into the office every day!).
4	Food security in developing countries	5	You learn about policy of food security and market structure. How do people get access to food?	1	I did not like this course. It was very different than what I had expected. It did not really focus on how to produce enough food, or access it specifically in developing countries. But

			You needed to complete a lot of tasks.		more so on more general concepts leaning more to political and economical sectors (in my opinion). The teacher did not speak English very well, and there were too many tasks that were not interesting or helpful. I found it all boring and irritating.
5	Introduction to wildlife management	5	You learn about general concepts within animal sciences, which are important in animal management and conservation. You needed to do a mini-presentation about 1 animal and complete a wildlife survey in your neighbourhood.	3	This was a nice and interesting course, but for a third year animal sciences bachelor it is too easy and too general. Most of the course material I had already had, or it was mentioned in the animal diversity conservation course (which was given by the same teacher). I had expected a more specific approach to wildlife management.
6	Project cycle management	5	You learn about the stages of setting up a project (any project...), different strategies and tools you can use. You need to apply this to your own project and you do this in a group.	2	The course was alright. It was quite abstract I think and it is not my cup of tea, but the structure and the level of the course were mostly alright. In the end, I have learned some stuff which will be useful in the future. I really hated the groupwork, since my team seemed to be incapable of communicating, handing things in on time, and just doing work in general. I think I have done 90% of the work in this very big project with a lot of irritation and resentment. Worst group work of my life. The teacher was alright, but he did nothing when I contacted him about this.
	Resource ecology	5	You learn about trophic interactions on all levels. About specific structures and interactions of plants, types of habitats and biomes and their characteristics, and about herbivores and	5	This was also one of my favourite courses. The teacher was amazing, and the course quite structured (which is rare in this university). This was one of the most difficult courses for me, because it also was about plants and biomes, which was mostly quite new

			their characteristics. You needed to do a presentation about a resource problem, and we went on multiple excursions		to me. The nice thing was that it was not at all a plant course. There were enough linkages to animals to keep it within the realm of Animal sciences, which I think makes it a valuable course. Still, it is not that hard compared to wur courses. The excursions were great. We went to a nature reserve outside of prague with cattle and wild horses, to a dairy farm, and to a lab to learn about soil erosion. 100% recommend.
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How is the study formalized? (E.g. study forms, academic level, examination, workload, lesson material)

They use Moodle as a format to post the learning material (just like brightspace). At my faculty you had block-courses and general courses. Block courses are compressed into 6 weeks, while normal courses run the whole semester (12 weeks). You really need to puzzle with your courses to make it all fit.

The exams of the courses were given in January, but you could do some before the Christmas break if you wanted. You could choose your own exam date, which was strange to me. The teacher would choose some dates (eg. 4 jan. 12 jan, 21 jan, 28 jan) and you can enrol at one of these dates. Some exams were written, some were oral. The academic level is nowhere near WUR if I am being honest. I would recommend doing master courses, because bachelor courses feel like high school in how you are treated and how the people around you behave as well. The master courses are nice, but I would say it is very doable as a bachelor student.

The workload was mixed. I think at WUR it is higher (especially because the material is harder) , but there were a lot of tasks and projects that needed to be completed. Perhaps it is because I am not used to so many subjects at the same time. However, you certainly have time to enjoy the city!

The lesson material was only PowerPoints. There were no recordings and no book or reader to study. Sometimes they would use articles.

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 chill and open-minded. Some are not so good at answering e-mails, they definitely prefer handling stuff in person. The interactions between students and lecturers are amicable. The amount of students at FTZ faculty per class is very low, so I would say it is more personal than at WUR. At first it was a little weird, but I think it is nice.

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

The university does not offer much. There is no sports centre (they recently introduced a few sport teams.. but it is not a big thing). There is a canteen for lunch, but it serves real Czech food which is not ideal for my vegan diet. The coffee spot is quite nice and even has cheap cocktails !

I do not think it is nice to study on campus so I did it mainly in my room. The library is not ideal and at my faculty there was also not that much place. I heard the economics building does have some nice study places though.

The uni shop is nice. They have merch, but also local and sustainable products.

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?)

I would recommend living in the city centre in a shared apartment of some sorts if you can find it. I have not been to the dorms, but I heard some horror stories. It can be quite difficult to get a room, but personally I was really lucky and my landlady was awesome. I payed about 500 euros/12,000 czk per month to live in one of the nicest neighbourhoods in Prague. It was a private room in a shared apartment with 4 other people. The flat was fully renovated and centrally located.

Also, don't be fooled by going to the west dorms if you are afraid of traveling time between the uni and the city. Google maps says it is 45 minutes, but from where I lived in Prague 2 (namesti miru) it only took around 10-15 minutes with the metro and 10-15 minutes with the bus. The rest is a little bit of walking and waiting. The travel time from the west dorms is around the same, and you need to travel to the city every time you want to do something fun.

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

The people can either be really nice or a bit harsh. They mostly just leave you be. The cuisine is quite meat based, but there are loads of vegan/vegetarian restaurants or options (if you choose to not eat Czech food). One of the things I missed most about home was the supermarkets though. Here they have limited selections (but I am really spoiled in that regard haha).

I love the public transport.

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

My room here is a little bit more expensive than in Wageningen, but I think you can find cheaper accommodation. In general, Prague is quite cheap. Especially alcohol! You pay around 5 euros for a cocktail. 2 euros for a beer. Also, going out for dinner is cheap! I spend between 10 and 15 euros in more trendy restaurants.

My grocery bill was around the same amount as I spend 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?)

Public transport is very cheap. I paid around 15 euros for a 3 months pass (bus, tram, metro). Trams also run at night, so getting home after a night of clubbing is no problem. I have taken a Bolt taxi only once because we needed to get to the cinema before the movie started (stress!), but that was quite cheap as well (I don't remember how much).

The uni is outside of the city centre, so everyone at least needs to squeeze into the bus. For me and most of my friends it was metro and bus.

6. Free time

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

I would recommend going to the concentration camp Terezin (Theresienstadt). Very impressive and only an hour away with the bus.

We also went to Dresden (2h by bus) for a day, which is a beautiful city in Germany. And we went to Vienna (4h).

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

Nutria island, as I like to call it. There are lots of very cute beaver like rats.

A ballet or opera at the state opera or National theater! Don't forget to dress up 😊 tickets are quite cheap.

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

For going out: Dog bar and Lucerna

Restaurants: Linh's vegan corner, Palo Verde, Paprika, BON ramen, Moment bistro (vegan Czech food!)

Visit all of the gardens in summer (in winter they are closed)

7.Challenges & best moment abroad

What was a challenge you have experienced?

I found it quite hard to make good friends. This sounds a little sad, but let me explain. You have contact with a lot of different people, especially in the beginning, for a short period of time. You meet at a party, a bar, or other activity. You see each other at this event, have a fun time, and then it is hard to get into contact again after. Especially since the start of the semester is very busy, everything is new and you have to take it all in. I am not the most social butterfly and for me it takes a while to open up. If that is you, don't worry! You still will have a great time. My tip is to befriend your housemates 😊. And remember it is also alright to fall back on the Dutch people who are also there.

Keeping in contact with my friends and family at home also has really helped me to deal with this as well.

What was your best memory abroad?

It was the first time going out to the dogs bar. That place is really cool. The live music was epic. The drinks cheap and tasty. I danced the night away, singing along to bangers with my friends.

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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