



# WUR Goes Abroad

## 1. Student Information

<b>Field of study in Wageningen</b>	Tourism
<b>Study period exchange (dd/mm/yyyy)</b>	19/09/2022 until 09/12/2022
<b>Country (exchange)</b>	U.K.
<b>City (exchange)</b>	Reading
<b>University (exchange)</b>	University of Reading
<b>Faculty (exchange)</b>	Agriculture, Policy and Development

## 2. Motivation for exchange

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

It had always been a dream of mine to live abroad for a period of time. Study abroad was the perfect opportunity to try this as it gave me a purpose and an institution to fall back on and help me get settled.

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

I wanted to go to an English-speaking country as this would give me more freedom to choose the modules I wanted to follow. I went with the University of Reading because they are located right in the centre of England which made it easy to go on day trips during the weekends, for the modules they offered and the good communication with their study abroad office who helped me with all my questions even before arrival.

## 3. Accessibility to reach destination

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

It's very easy to reach. I took the train from Amsterdam to London St. Pancras and from there you have to transfer to London Paddington (you can take the metro there) and from London Paddington there are fast trains to Reading that only take 25 minutes. In Reading you take bus 21 to the campus. If you're flying to the UK, it's best to fly to London Heathrow as there are direct trains and busses from Heathrow to Reading.

## 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
<b>1</b>	Forestry and Woodlands	5	Gaining a basic knowledge on forests and woodlands and how they can be managed.	5	Great teacher, small class and we had several field trips which really helped with the understanding.
<b>2</b>	Marine Biology and Conservation	10	Provides the basic understanding of the marine biosphere for someone who has little to no knowledge on the subject yet.	5	Really enjoyed the course, the lessons were about interesting subjects and easy enough to understand for someone with no background knowledge in this area.
<b>3</b>	Introduction to Evolutionary Processes	10	Provides an overview of what evolution is, how it works, what it does, etc.	3	Interesting course, and helps to create a better understanding of the biological world in a broad sense, it just wasn't my favourite subject.
<b>4</b>	Plant Diversity, Structure and Utilisation	5	Gives a basic understanding of plant usage and morphology etc.	4	We had a great teacher and a couple of really interesting practicals. The assignments were also very doable and a fun way to gain more knowledge.

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

For each class we had a few hours a week of lectures and a lot of hours of self-study. Most classes had some sort of field trip during the term as well. Examinations varied between classes but there were either short, online tests on course work or a group assignment. To finish the module study abroad students usually have to write an essay.

**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 lecturers were very approachable and helpful. At the whole university student wellbeing was promoted and there were a lot of opportunities to help you get settled and feel good in the environment. Campus culture is also a thing as most first year and study abroad students have accommodation on campus which helps to create a communal feeling. There was also a lot of support at the student accommodation available. It was usually the case that study abroad students cliqued together, in class and outside of class, and mingling with the locals was a bit harder as they are usually in a different phase of study and already have friends.

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

There is a lot offered by the university. The first week there is a freshers week in which you get introduced to everything on and around campus. There are also a lot of societies which you can join (you can also find this on the website of RUSU, the Reading University Student Association). With student housing you have the option of getting a catering membership, there are laundry facilities at each halls, and there are many sports facilities on campus. You can also join sports societies.

## **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?)**

The university has halls and you are able to sign up for those when applying to the university. They have en-suite rooms with shared kitchens and shared accommodation where you have to share the bathroom too. There are also private options in Reading if you'd like your own kitchen, however, those are usually further from campus and more expensive.

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

There were small cultural differences but overall it was really easy to adjust to British culture. The biggest thing for me was that they apologize for everything and I still do that now that I am home.

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

Depending on how much you pay in Wageningen, Reading was more expensive for me per month. I chose the cheapest halls accommodation available to me and paid € 2106,- for my entire stay from September 17 till December 31, so around € 600,- per month without catering package. It is handy to know that you'll have to pay for halls until the end of the month while the term ends in the first week of December. You'll also have to pay the accommodation up front so you don't pay your rent monthly like we do in Wageningen. Other living costs were pretty similar.

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

If you stay at halls you can just walk to campus, if you stay in town you can take the bus. Students get a discount fare for the busses (so called Boost ticket). It's also a good idea to get a railcard for the train as this will save you 1/3 of the price of your train tickets. The trains going from Reading are mostly operated by the Great Western Railway (the UK doesn't have only one train operator like we have the NS but many different ones). For the underground in London you can use contactless payments on your card/phone or get an oyster card, do *not* buy separate tickets, they are a lot more expensive. Taxis are also very expensive and uber doesn't really operate there.

## 6. Free time

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

My highlights were Bath and the Harry Potter Experience. But there are many great places nearby. Oxford is only a 20-minute train ride, and so are London and Windsor. The Study Abroad office offers 3 trips during the term as well which are very fun to go on and a very affordable way to travel. Do make sure to check availability of things you want to visit, because I missed out on a few things because I didn't book tickets in advance. Especially the Harry Potter Experience books up months in advance.

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

I'm sure this appears in travel guides, but I did a walking trip with the chaplaincy of the university to Avebury. In Avebury there is a stone circle somewhat like Stonehenge but it is less well known. It was a really nice trip though to see some more of the English countryside as this is hard to get to with public transport.

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

See if there are any interesting events going on during your stay and get your tickets in advance if needed. For example, during my stay we celebrated Guy Fawkes Day.

## 7. Challenges & best moment abroad

**What was a challenge you have experienced?**

During my time there were a lot of strikes in the country. Though I was supportive of the reason why they were striking, it was a bit difficult with travel plans as they were derailed quite a few times because of it.

**What was your best memory abroad?**

There were so many good times that were all great because of the friends I made. I had amazing flat mates and we had a lot of home cooked meals together and celebrated Halloween and Thanksgiving. That was definitely the main thing that made this study abroad experience so great.

**8. Contact details (optional)**

<b>Is the reader allowed to contact the writer?</b>	yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no <input type="checkbox"/>
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