



WUR Goes Abroad

1. Student Information

Field of study in Wageningen	Biology (ecology specifically)
Study period exchange (dd/mm/yyyy)	17/01/2022 until 05/06/2022
Country (exchange)	Sweden
City (exchange)	Uppsala
University (exchange)	Uppsala university
Faculty (exchange)	Biology

2. Motivation for exchange

Why did you choose to go on study exchange?

I knew I wanted to study abroad from the moment I saw a poster with the title 'spread your wings' on the bachelor open day. As someone who really wants to study and work abroad later, an exchange was really important for me as it allowed me to try out living and studying in another country. It was also a way to broaden my horizons and taste from different cultures for a few months.

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

I wanted to go to a place with snow in the winter and with a lot of nature. I had some Norwegian universities on my list I didn't make it to, and most universities in Finland taught the courses in Finnish. Then from all the universities left in Scandinavia I chose Uppsala because it had really interesting courses, and also many courses with a lot of fieldwork which I like.

3. Accessibility to reach destination

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

I personally took the plane from Schiphol to Arlanda airport in Stockholm. From Arlanda you can take a bus, the train or the taxi to Uppsala, though the bus is cheapest. However, if I had to do it again, I think I would have driven there with my own car (I was a bit nervous of the snow but Swedish roads are maintained really well in winter) or taken the train, which is what a lot of my friends did. The train is cheaper than the plane and you can take more baggage with you, which is always a problem with the airplane. Although the train of course takes much longer.

If you come by plane, the university has an arrival day, on which they arrange busses for students to get brought to your housing in Uppsala.

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	Behavioural Ecology	15	Animal behaviour	3	This is a master course goes really deep into animal behaviour and the ecology around it. I liked that there were many discussions that let you think a lot and solve problems. I didn't like that the course was very theoretical, and also we had some practicals but they were lab only while animal behaviour is about more than just the small animals.
2	Marine biology	15	Here you learn the basics of marine biology, from currents and anorganic conditions in the ocean to algae and all kinds of animals. After a few weeks of theoretical lessons and computer practicals you go on a 3-week fieldtrip to the Swedish westcoast, where you learn to identify Swedish marine invertebrates and algae.	5	The field trip was amazing, although you're busy from the morning until the afternoon and sometimes in the evening. The rest of the course was pretty relaxed. You really learn a lot and this course also gives a very good idea of what it would be like to work as a marine biologist.
3	Faunistics & Vertebrates	10	This was a bit of a bonus course (because you need 30 credits in one semester), with lectures twice a week in the evenings and a field trip in the weekend once every 1 or 2 weeks. You learn all the Swedish species of mammals, fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds and bats and how to recognise them, their sounds and some ecology.	5	I loved this course. It can be a bit much if you're also taking a fulltime course during the day, but I think it's definitely worth it. We spent entire days in the Swedish forests etc., and most of the teachers are really enthusiastic about their subjects. I think this course is also important if you're studying something like ecology because even though it's about Swedish species, it gives you some basic knowledge about animal

					species that is really useful to have as a biologist.
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How is the study formalized? (E.g. study forms, academic level, examination, workload, lesson material)

The courses I followed had lectures, practicals (either in the lab for behavioural ecology or on the computer for marine biology), discussions (usually you have to read a paper or book chapter and discuss it or answer questions about it), and for marine biology and faunistics I had a lot of fieldtrips. Marine biology and Faunistics & Vertebrates were really easy to follow. Behavioural Ecology was a bit more difficult because it was a master course, and I often felt I had less knowledge than the other students in my class, but overall it wasn't very difficult. The workload for Behavioural Ecology was also rather high, for Marine Biology and Faunistics it depended a bit on the period, but it could be high too. The lesson material is similar as in Wageningen, so you get powerpoints and some papers and you're advised to get the book, which you can often get in the university library, though I don't think you really need it.

The exams are a bit different in Sweden, you have 5 hours and it's open questions. For behavioural ecology I had a take-home exam but you were allowed to use book and notes etc. For marine biology it was without open book. For Faunistics you have 2 exams, one halfway for the first part and one at the end for the second part, and you get animal pictures and sounds to identify and a few open questions.

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 university is similar to Wageningen, you can call the teachers by their first name and it's all very casual. There's several different campuses all over the city, but depending on what you're studying you're always in the same buildings. The Swedish students in my classes were all very nice, though in general I think Swedish students keep more to themselves. In all my courses my class only had around 20 students, so everyone knew each other and it could be very cozy. The teachers are also really approachable and enthusiastic about their subjects. A difference with Wageningen is that the courses last around 8-10 weeks, so they're much longer, though also a bit more spread out I think.

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

There is a sports facility called Campus 1477 or something like that but I have never been there. In the EBC, where I studied, there was a restaurant to get food during the lunch, and there also a lot of microwaves because Swedish students eat warm food for lunch. I think almost every campus has a library where you can also sit to study and with printers etc.

For exchange students there is also the Buddy program you can sign up for. You get grouped with a couple of other exchange students and one or two students who have already been studying in Sweden. It's really great to make some friends the first few weeks and get to know the city and the nations.

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 Housing Office is where most students get their rooms, they have some student complexes and you can send them your top 3, then they will offer you a room (only once) and you can choose if you accept or not. The most popular student place is called Flogsta.

However, I personally had a lot of trouble with the Housing Office so I would advice not to go to them if not necessary. The rooms are really filthy when you get there and some student buildings were next to construction sites so there was a lot of noise all day long. It also seems as if they are part of the university but they're not, and when something is wrong they don't solve it but send you to the rental companies of the buildings themselves.

I would advice to check out the student nations since they also have housing options and there are a lot of facebook groups where many rooms are offered, which are sometimes also a lot cheaper than the rooms of the housing office.

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

Swedish people in general keep more to themselves, I was in a corridor with some Swedish students and we never cooked or ate together. Local cuisine is a bit similar as in the Netherlands, I think, as is the culture in general.

In Uppsala the student nations are a really big thing. You can sign up to one but still go to all of them, and they have a lot of activities to do, parties, sport and music clubs.

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

Rooms are around the same price as in Wageningen, but everything else is much more expensive. Especially groceries, the Hemköp and ICA can be pricy, Willy's and the Lidl are cheaper though still more expensive than in the Netherlands.

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

Most students get a bike, it's pretty flat so easy to cycle everywhere. There's the UL app for buses, you can get single tickets or a weekly or monthly ticket. The monthly ticket costs around 60 euros and you can just travel everywhere in Uppsala with it. The app is very easy to use and lets you know when buses are late etc. There are also electric scooters all over the city which you can use with an app. For the apps you need a creditcard if you don't have a Swedish bank account.

6. Free time

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

Some must-sees are Stockholm, Kiruna (in Lapland) and Gotland, which is an island near the Swedish west coast. In Uppsala some must-sees are the castle, the botanical gardens and the evolution museum, as well as Gamla Uppsala.

I would advice to plan trips early because it is much cheaper if you book earlier.

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

There is a lot of beautiful nature around Uppsala, so I would advice to just go out and explore. There are also many cosy cafes in the city.

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

You can follow the student nations on Instagram and facebook, they always have a lot of fun activities. In Sweden 'fika' is also very common. It means going to a café with friends and just relaxing/ socializing while having a coffee and some Swedish pastries.

7.Challenges & best moment abroad

What was a challenge you have experienced?

I had a lot of struggles with my room and the housing office in the beginning. Sometimes Swedish can be a bit of challenge.

What was your best memory abroad?

All the amazing places I travelled to.

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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