



WUR Goes Abroad

1. Student Information

Field of study in Wageningen	Bachelor Forest- and Nature Conservation
Study period exchange (dd/mm/yyyy)	22-08-2022 until 15-01-2023
Country (exchange)	Sweden
City (exchange)	Umeå
University (exchange)	Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU, Sveriges lantbruksuniversitet)
Faculty (exchange)	Forest Ecology and Management

2. Motivation for exchange

Why did you choose to go on study exchange?

Because I wanted to see what it was like to live and study abroad for a little while, and this was the perfect opportunity to do so. I also wanted to become more confident in speaking English, and grow as a person.

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

Because the nature is stunning, it has very cold winters and they are really experts on forest science.

3. Accessibility to reach destination

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

I travelled both to and from Umeå by train. It did not go very smoothly (especially the German train system was a big mess), but I am still happy that I travelled by train, because it is more environmentally friendly. If you are not so crazy as I am but still don't want to fly too much, I would recommend flying to Stockholm and then taking the train to Umeå (six hours).

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	Forest History	15	Learning about the history of boreal forests and methods of retracing a forests history	5	We did a week of fieldwork in Karats, which was in a very nice old forest. Awesome!
2	Forest Ecosystem Ecology	15	Modules on water, carbon, nitrogen, food webs, soils and more	4	I learned a lot here, and especially to work with R studio, but sometimes it was a bit repetative

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

The study pressure was lower than here at the WUR. I did not have to take any exams, but in turn I had to complete a lot of assignments. These were all pass or fail. You could also do extra assignments, for a higher grade. For both courses I obtained the highest grade by doing 3 extra assignments. We also had to write a big report in a group for both courses.

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 culture of the university is relaxed, inclusive and healthy. The lecturers are very willing to help you and will almost treat you as a future colleague, with makes it very easy to ask questions of give answers during lectures. The Swedish students were a bit more reserved, but after a while they started to open up to use (especially during the ping-pong battles). I would say that the biggest difference between SLU and WUR, is that the quality of the education at WUR is a bit higher and overall feels more formal. At SLU the education was more practical, which I loved! For example when we learned about forest history for the first course, we spend an entire morning making all kinds of fires and outdoor ovens to prepare food according to historic Sami practices and ate it afterwards all together.

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

The facilities at Umea campus were awesome. There is a nice library, lots of comfortable self study spots, a gym, a sauna, a rest room where you can sleep, catering (which was too expensive for me), a ping-pong table, computer rooms, free hot beverages and lockers.

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 owns rooms in corridors, so the university provides you with a room. You pay your rent to the university. Getting a room was no problem for me at all, and I was very pleased with it. My room was 20 m², with my own bathroom and toilet and a shared kitchen. This is the normal size for rooms in Umea.

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

You might have heard that Swedish people are quite reserved and do not open up easily. This I found to be true. They are always polite, but you should not expect to have a spontaneous conversation with a local in the supermarket for example. The local cuisine is quite meat heavy, but there is almost always vegetarian options available. And lastly I noted that the Swedish people are very organised and keep their places really clean.

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

My rent was the same in Umea as in Wageningen, about 350 euros.

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

In the summer and autumn I cycled to university. The bike I bought secondhand from Umea Wheels. Then when the snow fell, I started walking to university and sometimes took the bus. The bus tickets are about 2,30 euro's and the bus system is very frequent and reliable.

6. Free time

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

In Umea you have to go to the Vasterbottens Museum, an ice hockey match, some thrift stores, and Nydala (the lake). Especially in winter there are many langlauf tracks around the city, which is a very nice activity to do. And you can also go ice swimming in this lake. If you want to go on some bigger trips, you have to rent a car. There are long distances busses, but then you are very limited in destinations. We went on some trips to the mountains along the Norwegian borders. And if you go here during the autumn semester, I recommend you to spend Christmas in Sweden with friends and rent a cabin in the north. I had the most perfectly magical Christmas during my Erasmus!

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

Go to an ice hockey match from Bjorklöven!

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

Eating out and clubbing is quite expensive here (8 euros for a beer at the bar), so we had weekly dinners with our international friend group just in the corridors. Often we dedicated the evening to a country, and then we also cooked meals ourselves from that national cuisine.

7.Challenges & best moment abroad

What was a challenge you have experienced?

I struggled a bit in the beginning with the darkness. Very quickly it gets dark around 14:00 / 15:00 pm. I recommend taking vitamin D and making plans with friends in the evening to keep up your mental health 😊.

What was your best memory abroad?

By far the Christmas holiday I spend with six friends in the mountains in a cabin we rented for a week.

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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