



WUR Goes Abroad

1. Student Information

Field of study in Wageningen	Bsc Soil, Water Atmosphere
Study period exchange (dd/mm/yyyy)	06-09-2022 until 22-12-2022
Country (exchange)	Canada
City (exchange)	Vancouver
University (exchange)	University of British Columbia
Faculty (exchange)	Science

2. Motivation for exchange

Why did you choose to go on study exchange?

To me, exchange feels like something you have to do to get a full experience out of your studies. I really wanted to experience living in a different place. I was also curious about studying at a different (especially bigger) university than Wageningen.

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

2022 is the first year an Erasmus+ grant is given to students going to Canada. This is why I included this country in my research for exchange universities. The fact that friends of mine (which I rarely ever see because they are from the US) are studying at a different university close to Vancouver, was a big reason for me to go to here. Moreover, the scenery is amazing. The mountain ranges make for beautiful nature and in combination with a big city, it felt like the place to be.

3. Accessibility to reach destination

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

You have to take the plane. I booked cheaper tickets, with a layover at London Heathrow. I advise you to buy direct flight tickets with KLM from Amsterdam, because the layover was very exhausting. Moreover, Heathrow is a chaotic airport, with lots of delays, which resulted in my luggage arriving 2 days after my arrival in Vancouver.

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	<i>ATSC 201: Meteorology of Storms</i>	6	A wide range of meteorology topics with the focus on storms and hazards occurring North America.	5	Interesting and fun course that might be challenging for beginners in the topic and rather easy for people that already have affiliation with it. It includes a very wide range of topics and the course is fast paced.
2	<i>EOSC 211: Computer Methods in Earth, Ocean and Atmospheric Sciences</i>	6	Beginner Python course where you apply this coding in earth, ocean and atmospheric problems.	5	Basics of Python, like Numpy and Pyplot. If you already know the basics of Python, this course is likely to be easy for you. The course has fun labs which can also be challenging.
3	<i>EOSC 330: Principles of Geomorphology</i>	6	Landforms of the Earth surface and the processes that form them	5	Fun course with a smaller group of students (40). The lectures are very interesting and are about endothermic and exothermic processes. No need to know extensive geology, but a little knowledge is necessary. Labs contain air photo interpretation and geo information science.
4	<i>EOSC 372: Introductory Oceanography: Circulation and Plankton</i>	6	Basic physics, chemistry and biology of oceans, like nutrients, phytoplankton and water movement.	4	Fun course about the basics of oceanography. During the first weeks you get knowledge of the different topics in biology, chemistry and physics, which gets put together in a bigger picture during the last two weeks. Teaching was sometimes a bit unnecessarily difficult, or they stayed at a specific topic for too long. Biology in high school is not required, as I didn't have this and did fine. They did give small assignments every class, which I found a bit too much.

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

Most courses have lectures. The size of classes can be very different, but the classes tend to be larger than at WUR. A lot of classes have assignments you need to hand in, some weekly, some have small assignments every class. There is less emphasis on the final examination; sometimes the midterm have the same weight. Most courses have midterm exams.

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?)

There is more emphasis on participation than in Wageningen. You also get grades for participating, which can boost your grade significantly sometimes. Students are way more motivated to study and in general the majority gets good grades. Lecturers are very approachable, even though the class sizes are so big. For a lot of courses, you can come to office hours to ask questions/talk with your lecturer. There wasn't a lot of engagement with local students, only during assignments and sometimes during class. They focus is more on studying, while exchange students also want to explore the city/state. However, I found that the local students were easily approachable and are very nice. The biggest differences with WUR was that UBC is just way bigger.

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

There are a lot of restaurants and food opportunities on campus. However, it is a little bit more difficult to do groceries. When you live on campus, you are likely to take the bus to do groceries, which is not a very big problem. The campus has sport buildings and fields comparable to the Bongerd. They also have two gyms, which are crowded most of the time. They are building a new student recreational building, which should have more room for sports/gyms. In most student housing, there is a laundry room in the same tower or building, which is fairly priced.

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?)

There is a possibility to get on campus housing. Most of the students from WUR received a room on campus, but there is still a likely chance that you can't get a room on campus. The room market in Vancouver is very scarce and it might be difficult to get a room off campus. Rooms on campus are one person per room. The rent rates are much higher than in Wageningen. I would say it is about twice as expensive.

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

Vancouver is still a very western city, but also has a lot of Asian influences due to its high Asian population. The restaurants are very diverse, but nothing you wouldn't expect from such a big city. Prices of vegetables and fruit can be very high, but as long as you know where to buy it is fine. Getting proper bread can also be difficult, as most bread is very

sugary. If you find good bread, it is likely to be at least twice as expensive as in the Netherlands. Furthermore, taxes are never included in mentioned prices. Taxes are not very high, but sometimes it can be a bit annoying to pay more for something that you thought was cheap.

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

Cost of living is more expensive as in Wageningen, but it is difficult to give a very good indication due to inflation and changing exchange rates. I received an Erasmus+ and Holland scholarship and with those I still spend around the same amount of money as I would spend in Wageningen for everything.

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

It is required to buy a monthly bus pass when you are studying at UBC, but this card is not expensive and you can get everywhere in metro Vancouver, with frequent busses. I really liked this. There is also a car sharing service called Evocar. This service lets you use a car for one day for 100 Canadian Dollars and you don't even have to pay for fuel. Split this with 5 people and you have a very cheap rental car. You can only use this car in Canada, so for trips to the US you have to book a (way) more expensive rental car.

6. Free time

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

Use Evocar to get to locations outside Vancouver. Plan hikes in the warmer months, like September. You can still do hikes in October, but temperatures at high altitudes are getting colder then. Must-sees are: Garibaldi lake, Banff, Whistler, a lot of hikes along the sea to sky highway and a Canucks game. There are a lot more activities you can do, but those are the must-sees.

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

During the midterm break, I stayed in an AirBnB near Mount Hood, Oregon. It is a long drive, but it is really fun. I was there in November and there was quite a lot of snow around the mountain; perfect for snow-shoe hikes. On the way back we also stopped in Seattle for five hours, which is short but still fun.

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

Meet in Gastown was a very nice vegan restaurant. I only found out after I had dinner that it was vegan, which was funny because I thought I'd eaten a burger.

7. Challenges & best moment abroad

What was a challenge you have experienced?

Adapting to the environment when having a jet lag.

What was your best memory abroad?

Hiking through kilometres of trails covered in snow at Mount Hood.

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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