



WUR Goes Abroad

1. Student Information

Field of study in Wageningen	BSc Environmental Sciences
Study period exchange (dd/mm/yyyy)	02/09/2022 until 23/12/2022
Country (exchange)	Canada
City (exchange)	Vancouver
University (exchange)	University of British Columbia (UBC)
Faculty (exchange)	Faculty of Arts

2. Motivation for exchange

Why did you choose to go on study exchange?

I wanted to go on exchange, because I really wanted to discover how it's like to live and study in a different country. Also, after having studied in Wageningen for four years I really wanted to experience a completely new place.

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

I chose for Vancouver in Canada because I really enjoy outdoor activities such as hiking/surfing/skiing and because I wanted to experience living in a large modern city. Vancouver offers the perfect combination of those two things, since it is located in an area with stunning nature (British Columbia), and the city itself is vibrant and has a lot to offer.

3. Accessibility to reach destination

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

Consider booking a flexible flight, since the final exam scheduled will not be published yet when the semester starts. Therefore, you might be finished earlier than the official end of the exam period. However, you can also spend your free days staying in the area because there is a lot to discover.

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	COHR 402 Leadership	3	Interesting course covering the different aspects of effective leadership with a strong focus on practical applications.	5	Very inspiring teacher
2	COHR 411 Managing and Building Teams	3	Follow-up course of the above course. Similar course structure but focusses more on how to build and foster effective teams.	5	Again, great teacher and a lot of interaction during classes
3	ECON 374 Land and Resource Economics	6	Course covers variety of environmental economics topics. Useful if you have some background in economics	3.5	Generally interesting course and very friendly prof, however lectures felt a bit like a routine. Still recommend it if you are interested in the topic.
4	DSCI 100 Introduction to Data Science	6	Very instructive course covering the basics of programming in R.	4	Very well structured and very useful for almost any programme.
5	COMM 295 Managerial Economics	6	Introduction to business economics	4	One of the harder courses I have followed, but interesting. If you keep up with the course work the exams are very doable.
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How is the study formalized? (E.g. study forms, academic level, examination, workload, lesson material)

It is good to know that the academic culture at UBC differs a lot from the Dutch (or European) one. Final grades are composed of numerous small assignments which are due throughout the term. This forces you to put in quite some effort throughout the term, but also means that the final exams contribute to your final grade a lot less than they would in Wageningen.

Also, presence at classes is often mandatory, and class participation is very important (and even graded!)

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?)

Lectures are very approachable and are strongly committed to supporting their students, I would say more than at the WUR.

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

The UBC campus is insane. It has its own beaches, hospitals, botanic gardens, pubs, sport facilities etc. Because it has some many different facilities it feels like a small self-sustaining city.

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?)

UBC offers student housing and has two residences primarily offering rooms to exchange students, namely Walter Gage and Fairview Crescent. I was lucky to get a room in Fairview, which is in my opinion the better of the options. If you do not receive campus housing there are still options to rent something close to the campus. If you are in this situation, I would look for something in the areas Kitsilano or Westpoint Grey.

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

Canadians could be considered more friendly than the Dutch. I was also surprised to see that especially the Canadians in larger cities are more American than I had expected.

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

The place is VERY expensive. Rental prices for residences start at 800 euros/month, groceries are twice/or three times the Dutch prices (alcohol in particular), and most paid activities are extortionate.

However, there are also some grants offered by the WUR which make an exchange in Vancouver more doable. Also, I would not let yourself be discouraged by the prices since it is an amazing place to go to.

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 in Vancouver is very good. UBC offers a mandatory but very useful transport membership for students, which costs around 140 euros for the whole term and allows unlimited use of public transport within Vancouver.

6. Free time

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

There are some many great things to do in the area, but here a selection which I recommend the most:

- Vancouver Island (go by ferry) TIP: visit Tofino which is great for surfing. I joined the UBC surf club and did a four day trip to Tofino which was absolutely amazing.
- Granville Island/Stanley Park/Downtown are the highlights of Vancouver itself
- Hike to a hut of the Varsity Outdoor Club. You can sleep there and they are located in the most stunning places.
- Canadian Rocky Mountains (BANFF/CANMORE) : I spend my mid-term break here. It's a long drive (10 hours), but the drive itself is already worth the trip since the landscape you drive through is amazing. I stayed in Canmore for four nights at the beginning of November. Ski season starts very early in the Rocky Mountains so we skied for two days (one day Sunshine Village, the other day at Lake Louise) -> highly recommend it!
- Whistler: amazing place for skiing, I bought the student season pass and went there almost every day I could after the season had started TIP join the Ski & Board Club and join their opening weekend trip to Whistler
- Frat parties/clubs in downtown (Hollywood in Kitsilano and Levels are fun) : when we were not doing trips in the weekend we often went to frat parties on Fridays (which have free entry at the start of the term) and to clubs (which are fun but very expensive).

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

You'll have a lot of work to do for uni throughout the week so work hard on the week-days so that are you are completely free during the weekends. The campus offers many great places to eat, but I mostly cooked myself or with friends because I wanted to save money on food expenses (so that I could ski more :))

7.Challenges & best moment abroad

What was a challenge you have experienced?

Adjusting to living and studying in a completely new country is always a bit of a challenge and offers very useful experiences and lessons. In addition, you are forced to be very independent because you need to find out and manage a lot by yourself.

What was your best memory abroad?

The trip the Canadian Rocky Mountains is one my best memories abroad, I've written a short description about it under 'Free Time'.

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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