



WUR Goes Abroad

1. Student Information

Study programme WUR	Bachelor Environmental Sciences
Exchange semester (dd/mm/yyyy)	23/09/2023 until 25/01/2024
Exchange destination: University	Aberystwyth University
Faculty	Department of Life Sciences
Country	United Kingdom
City	Aberystwyth

2. Motivation for exchange

Why did you choose to go on study exchange?

I wished to leave Wageningen. I felt living in a new environment would free my spirit, let me discover myself and others more.

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

My father is from the UK, and I wished to connect to my roots, understand British culture more. Wales was specifically of interest because of its Celtic culture. I grew up in Celtic France, and feel a deep connection to the Celtic traditions and landscapes.

3. Accessibility to reach destination

Do you have any tips to reach your exchange destination?

You can travel all the way there by Flixbus and National Express buses, which is very nice. The train from Birmingham to Aberystwyth is also very nice.

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	Marine Biology	10	Extensive insight into the physical characteristics of the marine environment, how organisms adapt to these conditions, and how these organisms interact with one another	5	I really recommend, it gives a great overview of the marine environment, especially for beginners. The lecturers are very spirited.
2	Global Biodiversity Conservation	10	Discusses what is biodiversity, what are different methods of conservation, and their pros and cons.	5	Really interesting course, based on a lot of discussion. The teacher makes you critically think about what is biodiversity, conservation and whether it makes sense.
3	Population and Community Ecology	10	Overview on patterns of species interactions (competition, mutualism, predation..) in populations and community level, life tables (also studied in computer practicals)	4	Very interesting, yet not the clearest structure. The life table section is very interesting and practical.
4					
5					
6					

What is it like to study there?

E.g. study forms, academic level, examination, workload, lesson material.

It is quite a light workload, with only one to three hours of class a day, and little self-study (although I am not sure this applies to all courses). The courses were good level, not too difficult, but definitely interesting and bringing critical thinking. I found the course contents much clearer and simply explained than at the WUR. The examinations were very doable if you study only in the month of January, with a mix of seen and unknown 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?

It is a very friendly university. In third year, classes are quite small, and the lecturers are therefore very approachable. They treat their students like friends, are called by their first names. There is much closer contact with them than at WUR, I find.

What does the university offer students additionally?

E.g. catering, sports facilities, laundry facilities?

There is a food hall on campus, but as accommodation is only a 5-10min walk from campus, I did not use it often. There is wide range of sporting facilities, wit football fields, rugby fields, swimming pool, gym, small bouldering hall.

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?

You automatically get a room in student housing if you sign up in time. I really recommend Pentre Jane Morgan, as most exchange students go there. It is similar to a little student village, and borders the forest. It's beautiful :)

What is the culture of the country like?

E.g. Differences with home, local cuisine, habits, manners?

Wales has a very friendly and kind culture. People are very approachable, and can quite often spontaneously come to talk with you in the street. It's quite beautiful. There is a very slow lifestyle in mid-Wales, the countryside feeling I suppose, yet a very open-minded countryside. There is a heavy drinking culture, especially amongst students, but you also have opportunities to go out to the pubs without drinking. They have great pool tables!

Could you give some information about public transport infrastructure?

E.g. Cost public transport card, taxi prices, how to travel to the university?

At the town's scale, you can take taxis or buses up and down the hill (from campus to town). But it does cost money, so be ready to get your legs muscled up ;) There is a really good bus network across Wales, mostly going up and down the coast. You can get to the bottom of the Cader Idriss mountain for example, if you want to go hiking. Or all the way up to Anglesey and Bangor. Really recommend!

6. Expenses

Can you give an indication of your expenses for/during your exchange?

E.g. you can also indicate price differences (higher/lower/equal) in comparison to the Netherlands.

Ticket there: 150

Visa if applicable:

Vaccinations if applicable:

Insurances (extra, if applicable):

Housing costs per month & type of housing/accommodation: 450 pounds, room in shared house

Groceries: equal

Public transport: lower

Restaurant/going out for dinner: higher

Daytrips/sight-seeing: lower

Additional remarks regarding expenses?

7. Free time

What are must-sees in the area?

E.g. nearby destinations, how do you prefer to travel, when to plan?

There are many magical places in Wales :) Near Aberystwyth, Devil's Bridge is beautiful, and the Centre for Alternative Technology in Machynlleth is very interesting. Mach is quite a nice town in general. Further north, there are the beautiful mountains of Snowdon and Cader Idriss to hike up. They feel quite like the Lord of the Rings. The Cambrain mountains and the dams of the Elan valley are also wonderful. If you get up to Anglesey, I've also been told the island have magical landscapes..

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

Not sure, simply everywhere in Wales is quite beautiful to wander in the fields. You will meet many sheep. Celtic rainforests are beautiful if you manage to get to one.

Do you have general tips and tricks about leisure time?

E.g. recommendations for restaurants, going out?

Wander through the hills, you meet wonderful people, animals, and learn about yourself. In Aberystwyth, I really recommend the Bank Vault pub for some diverse musical evenings. It's a small pub with music ranging from folk, to Spanish, gipsy, jazz..

8. Challenges & best moment abroad

What challenges did you encounter and how did you overcome them?

I did encounter difficulties with the drinking and drug culture in the UK. The drinking culture is a little higher than your average student drinking culture, and is sometimes a little intense. You will find the right people overtime, don't feel forced to play along.

There is also high consumption of drugs, so be careful not to be dragged along with if you don't want to.

What is your best memory of your time abroad?

My most beautiful memory is slipping into the sea as the sun started setting, after a day of magically picking mushrooms in the rolling hills. It was a clear blue sky. I slipped out and the sun vanished below the horizon...

9. Contact details (optional)

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