



# WUR Goes Abroad

## 1. Student Information

<b>Field of study in Wageningen</b>	Nutrition and Health
<b>Study period exchange (dd/mm/yyyy)</b>	01-03-2023 until 30-06-2023
<b>Country (exchange)</b>	Austria
<b>City (exchange)</b>	Vienna
<b>University (exchange)</b>	Universität für Bodenkultur
<b>Faculty (exchange)</b>	Umwelt und Bioressourcen management

## 2. Motivation for exchange

### Why did you choose to go on study exchange?

Firstly, I was really interested in living a life outside the Netherlands. Starting from zero again and let's see whatever will happen. Besides that, I became interested in the student life in other universities, mainly abroad. How would it be to study in a big capital city for example. But also, how is it to live in such a big city.

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

Austria is one of my favourite countries, mainly because of the mountains, but also the villages and the language. When I saw Vienna on the exchange list, I was interested immediately, but I saw something like this: 'All courses in German! Which was the reason why I deleted it from my list. But there was the moment that a friend told me that there are also many English courses. So that's how I started doing more research about BOKU. The courses were really nice, and exactly what I wanted or was interested for (really focused on sustainability, climate change and agriculture). Moreover, I had never been in Vienna so that was for me an extra motivation to start exploring life over there.

## 3. Accessibility to reach destination

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

From the Netherlands to Vienna, it is possible to take the night train which is quite good. You can choose if you want a place in the bed cabin or more a regular one. I would highly recommend the bed cabin, because the regular one will break up your whole night and day. It is almost impossible to sleep or even sleep a little bit over there. Otherwise the Flixbus is also possible. You will have more space for suitcases (if you book it). In the train there is limited space, but you can always find a solution to store it somewhere in the cabin. Of course the plane is also possible, but because of climate principles I do not prefer to travel in that way.

## 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
<b>1</b>	Corporate Sustainability	3	Philosophical view on sustainability issues and creating solutions for recent problems.	5	It was an active course, we had to make multiple blogs on a website every week. And were pushed to think critical about our high western standards. The teacher is amazing with her enthusiasm.
<b>2</b>	Hydrobiology	3	Excursion course about living organisms in water systems in Austria	4	It was an excursion course. We had to find our own accommodation in a village and had to do research in groups every day together with teachers.
<b>3</b>	Applications for river landscape management	2	Excursion course in the mountains about the river systems, hydropowerplants and other activities around the glaciers.	5	Accommodation and transport provided (70euro), and many interviews, presentations, lectures and visits to companies and organisations.
<b>4</b>	Crop Production in the Tropics and Subtropics	4	Course with mainly lectures and presentations about all the characteristics and ecology of crops	4	I liked the one big presentation about your own chosen crop. A subject where you can dive in completely.
<b>5</b>	Vine nutrition	1,5	Course about the nutritional needs of vines and agricultural approaches	5	A few ECTS but really worth it. Oral exam which can be quite nice.
<b>6</b>	Global Waste Management	3	Waste management in different countries. Separation processes per waste type.	3	Presentation about waste management in the student's own country. It was nice to dive in the world of waste, and get known all the processes.

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

Way different compared to the WUR. The university is smaller and more personal than the WUR, but besides that, more independence and inner motivation is expected. In many courses, you can choose your own subject for presentations, blogs of papers. But also, you can choose as class what kind of examination you would prefer. The teachers provide oral exams, exams on paper, or presentations for example. There is a lot of freedom in the way the education is organized at BOKU. Also the workload really depends on the teacher and her/his requirements. Teachers expect that students do like the subject of the course, so they really want to go to the lectures rather than they 'have to' while they are actually not motivated. Sometimes teachers want you or ask you to attend lectures or make exercises that don't even count for your grade or requirements for passing the course.

**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 never mandatory, but sometimes highly recommended, and I would say, also necessary for specific information (for example the decision of the class whether there will be an oral exam or paper exam, or the division of presentations of everyone. Those things happen orally during lectures). There was a continual mix between local students, exchange students or international master students for example. They were interacting quite good I would say. I feel like BOKU is a bit more mixed, compared to the WUR because of all WUR's Dutch student associations. That makes Dutch students more stucked to other Dutch students, so that international students are feeling more separated. Besides that, at BOKU there were a lot of activities organized by the university, which were accessible for free and for whoever and whenever who wanted to come. Many of them were organized outside where we were drinking spritzer or Austrian beer, just in front of university buildings. That are places where dutch and international students can connect easily. For example in the form of a beer garden.

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

There were some restaurant/catering places. One for coffee and something sweet, and one big cantine for warm meals, but quite expensive. Besides that, there was vegan/vegetarian start up cantine.

## **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?)**

It was very easy to get a room in Vienna. There were many websites where you could sign up, and also very cheap. I had a room for 395 euros in Vienna, which would not be possible in Amsterdam I guess. I got mine via Oead student housing, which is part of WIHAST. In 'Haus Panorama' (to which the Forsthausgasse and Lorenz-Müller-gasse belong) many BOKU students stay. I would not recommend the accommodation, but if you are looking for students that are living nearby and you want to live close to the Danube and the university, it is a nice suggestion.

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

The Viennese people are not very kind. You will notice it on the streets or in cafés and shops. In Dutch we say: The customer is king, but in Vienna, the employee is. You should make the work of the employee as comfortable as possible. Besides, people don't really care about you on the street. If you are wearing something weird, nobody will react. That makes the city very comfortable, because nobody is judging. It is also officially recognized as most safe and liveable city in Europe at least. I have never felt uncomfortable on the street, not even in the middle of the night on my bike.

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

I would say 390 euro's. Most of the people around me (exchange students) lived in the same kind of accommodation. You can compare it with the 'starflats' in Wageningen. Such as Hoevenstein, Dijkgraaf etc. But these are a bit more individualistic. You will not share kitchenware with your floor. You have to buy everything yourselves, and bring it all the time and all the way to the kitchen. But it depends on the accommodation. There were also people that lived with 2 Austrians in an apartment. Most of the local Austrian students do rent an apartment with each other with maximal 4 people. I think that the price can be a bit higher.

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

As an exchange student you can buy a student metro card for a small amount of money. The amount was only 78 euro's. You can take the metro, bus, nightbus, tram, train everything. You only have to make sure that you always carry it with you, because you can be picked out (happens I think once a month) and if you can't show your card, you will get a high fine. You don't have to check in or check out, that's why you don't need your card regularly, but still need it in case a controller shows up.

## **6. Free time**

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

I would recommend to visit Bratislava and Prague and Budapest, because it is very close, and easy with the train or bus. And my last suggestion is to go visit the mountains. Go skiing in Stuhleck for example (also possible for day trip). And try to keep up with the ESN activities because they can easily show you around in Vienna but also in and around Austria (I did a skitrip which was also very good organized!).

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

Besides, go to the big events that are organized in the city, such as easter markets, concert at Schönbrunn palace, festivals in front of the government building, skate events or the yearly biggest free festival in the world: Donau insel Fest. I would also recommend to rent a bike and go for cycling on donau insel (danube island), or go for a swim and a drink over there (the bars are really nice, but a bit expensive). You can also rent a boat for a low price over there. My last suggestion for Vienna is to try some of the Stadtwanderweg hikes. Stadtwanderweg 1 is my favourite, you will walk through the vineyards and have a great view over the city (from the hills at the side of Vienna). The names of the hills are Kahlenberg and Leopoldsberg. At Kahlenberg there is also a nice swimming pool with a great view over the city. It is not expensive to go there. It is called: Krapfenwaldbad.

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

The favourite bar/club of my friends and I was club 'Loco' because of the cheap drinks. From 19:00-20:00, it was only 1,40 euros for a good cocktail. And every hour later, it was one euro more, until 23:00.

Another nice club is for example Travel Shack and Pappala pub was also a nice place for us. But you should really take a look on the planning of ESN. They organize parties all over the year, always in another club.

A very cozy restaurant with amazing schnitzels is restaurant 'Purstner'. It has a traditional wooden design.

## **7.Challenges & best moment abroad**

### **What was a challenge you have experienced?**

To use my time efficient. You don't have many mandatory activities, also not in the weekend. Make appointments with yourself to do things around. Go out on your own, I enjoyed that a lot. But sometimes there is a temptation to stay in bed for the whole day, just because you have time and nobody expects something from you, or has social control over you. Make it yourself comfortable and don't get lazy, I would give as advice to myself haha.

### **What was your best memory abroad?**

The exploration of all the new things in the new city. Getting a real local, tourist and student at the same time. Sometimes I was just biking around without a destination, that are things that I have really enjoyed.

## 8. Contact details (optional)

<b>Is the reader allowed to contact the writer?</b>	yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Name/e-mail</b>	Name: Manel de Bruijn Email: maneldebruijn@hotmail.com	