



WUR Goes Abroad

1. Student Information

Study programme WUR	Bachelor Forest- and Nature Conservation
Exchange semester (dd/mm/yyyy)	01-09-2023 until 02-02-2024
Exchange destination: University	University of Bologna
Faculty	Agriculture and food sciences AND Sociology
Country	Italy
City	Bologna

2. Motivation for exchange

Why did you choose to go on study exchange?

To broaden my horizon and meet people from different cultures and experience how it feels to live and study in a foreign country

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

Italian culture really suits me and I appreciate the more laid-back approach to life and studying. Bologna is famous for its vibrant student life and open-minded inclusive vibes. I expected to find a place where I would really feel at home and I did.

3. Accessibility to reach destination

Do you have any tips to reach your exchange destination?

It is perfectly reachable by Flixbus. It's very cheap and the direct bus travels in the night. On top of this, the bus station is located on an easily accessible location in Bologna.

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	Urban Studies and Climate Change	8	It explains urban contexts and dilemmas both socially and ecologically.	4	The course offers a lot of freedom to follow your own interests. Examination is less traditional, you can choose how to finish the course; exam, interview, project, presentation
2	Social Innovations as Responses to Social Problems	4	Brings to light current social problems in society and offers the tools to analyse solutions	4	The course offers a lot of freedom to follow your own interests. You have to do an interview and analyses of this, which teaches you a lot of skills and gives you the opportunity to connect to professionals with the same interests.
3	Ecosystems and Plant Ecophysiology	6	Orchard management and fruit tree morphology	2	The agreement of BBN is with the agricultural department, which makes very little sense, but makes agricultural courses mandatory. The course is very well-structured, however it is about intensifying orchard production systems. Nature or environment are beyond the scope of this course.
4	Greenhouses and Vertical Farming Systems	6	Explores different intensive crop production models.	2	Again quite unrelated to forest and nature conservation, however does offer a lot of new knowledge on high-tech farming techniques. It considers the socio-economic contexts of farming, which is nice.
5					
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What is it like to study there?

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

Workloads vary significantly between faculties. In general workload is much lower than in Wageningen, the group work is less intensive and the academic level, even in master courses is lower. The examination is very relaxed, oftentimes you can schedule a date with your professor whenever it suits you to do the exam and choose the mode of examination; oral or written. Lesson materials consist mainly of lecture slides.

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 lecturers are approachable, but the atmosphere is more formal than at the WUR, professors expect to be treated with a traditional sort of respect. Engagement is very important for most professors. The difference with the WUR is mostly found in a more relaxed approach of Bologna, whatever your request is, the professors will most always cooperate with your request rather than stick to the prescribed methods.

What does the university offer students additionally?

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

Sport facilities from the university are lacking, there are student cafeterias in the university district of the city where cheap lunches are available and laundry facilities are offered not by the university but by companies in the 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?

Housing is incredibly difficult and often more expensive than Wageningen. Private rooms are very expensive. Shared bedrooms are very common. The university does not offer help in finding housing, there are however several agencies at which you can apply and sign up for a room.

What is the culture of the country like?

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

The cuisine of Italy is amazing, eating out is much more accessible and normal, since it is possible to buy full-sized pizzas for 3 euros only. People are very outgoing and social and the street atmosphere is very inclusive and accepting.

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 is very important in Bologna, it is possible to go by bike most everywhere, but it's just as easy to buy a discounted public transport card through the university which enables you to take the city busses unlimited for 180 euros a year.

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: much lower

Visa if applicable:

Vaccinations if applicable:

Insurances (extra, if applicable):
Housing costs per month & type of housing/accommodation: more
Groceries: much less
Public transport: much less
Restaurant/going out for dinner: much less
Daytrips/sight-seeing: much less

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?

For only 2 euros you're in Florence by Flixbus. Travel by Flixbus within Italy in general is very cheap, going to Rome and back is possible for just 12 euros, just like Venice and many other big cities.

Near Bologna itself are nature areas to the south and an incredible amount of ancient buildings in the centre. Just outside the centre is San Luca, a famous church located on top of a hill.

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

Labas; it is a occupied square in Bologna which has a protected legal status now and offers a great place to gather on Wednesdays, offering live music, drag shows, free entry voguing performances and much more.

Do you have general tips and tricks about leisure time?

E.g. recommendations for restaurants, going out?

Take it easy and take your time to visit cafés and restaurants, eating out is much cheaper than in the Netherlands, while the food is often better, so enjoy it while you're there.

8. Challenges & best moment abroad

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

My exchange coordinator there has never been reachable and has never responded to any of my emails, so I had to design my courses myself, which led to a lot of changes in the learning agreement. It can be solved by attending several courses too many in the first week and then deciding which to drop. In many courses it is also just fine to join later.

What is your best memory of your time abroad?

Walking the path of Gods from Bologna to Florence, a six day hike through the mountains. Even in winter it is incredibly beautiful, but definitely a recommendation for the other seasons if you're not well-equipped.

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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