



WUR Goes Abroad

1. Student information

Study programme WU	International Development Studies
Exchange semester (dd/mm/yyyy)	13/09/2023 until 18/01/2024
Exchange destination: University	Universita degli studi di Firenze
Faculty	Faculty of economics and management
Country	Italy
City	Florence

2. Motivation for exchange

a. Why did you choose to go on study exchange?

When I heard that we had the opportunity to study abroad in our third year, I became so excited. I immediately knew that I wanted to go. I have always loved travelling and this seemed like the perfect chance to step out of my comfort zone and go live abroad in a city that I love for a longer period.

b. What is the reason you chose for this country?

Italy and its rich culture have always captivated me. I've been there multiple times on family holidays and it never disappointed. The people are warm and informal, which I love, the nature is beautiful and the food is simply amazing. Italy is full of history and I admire how much the country preserves its heritage. In short, the country is great in my opinion.

c. What is the reason you chose for this university?

Florence is an example of a city where the history is cherished. The city is called the cultural capital of the world and that is part of the reason that I really wanted to go to this university. To add to that, the university offered a lot of courses that seemed interesting to me.

3. Accessibility to reach destination

Do you have any advice about reaching your exchange destination?

There is an airport in Florence. However, I would recommend going with the train. This is better for the environment and friends of mine did it and had a good experience with it. I had the luxury that my parents brought me with the car.

4. University and studying

a. 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	Comparative migration law	9	We learnt about migration laws in Europe. But concepts as trafficking and child migration were also discussed during this course.	4	
2	Food quality and culture for tourism	6	This course was a bit chaotic but some topics were really fun, especially the ones about Italian local foods.	3	The level is not really high and communication with the teachers was a bit vague as their English was not very good.
3	International law	6	Very interesting course, taught by an expert. You learn a lot about treaties, obligations and laws.	3	Was a tough course and hard to study for exams as there was no powerpoint or whatsoever to study from. You only had your lecture notes. Sometimes really long lectures (4 hours. Would have ranked this higher if we had a clearer overview of the study material.
4	Demography and tourism	6	You learn about how populations interrelate. Also about birth and death rates.	2,5	Did not feel pressure to visit the lectures.
5	Human rights and armed conflicts	6	Overlapped a bit with international law. Interesting topics as war, torture, treaties, etc.	5	Very interesting, long lectures and again no powerpoint or something like that. Teachers English was very good and knew a lot about the topics.
6					

a. I had sufficient possibilities to select suitable courses that were taught in English (Yes, No - Explain):

Yes , there were many courses that were taught in English.

b. I had sufficient possibilities to select suitable courses in my field of interest (Yes, No - Explain):

No, the WUR has a connection with the faculty of economics and management. When I was there, I found out that there was a faculty of politics as well, which fits my interest and specialisation more.

c. I am satisfied with the level of the courses that I followed (Yes, No - Explain):

No, I followed 5 courses and 33 ECTS in total. If I had to decide now, I would have chosen to follow 4 courses, two with 9 ECTS and two with 6 ECTS.

d. I am satisfied, in the end, with the selection of courses I followed (Yes, No - Explain):

Every course that I followed was interesting. I might have changed some things in the end but I am satisfied.

f. What is it like to study there?

E.g. Study forms, academic level, examination, workload, lesson material?

The academic level really differs per course. Some courses were quite challenging while others seemed pretty easy. The level of English was not always as good, sometimes the teacher started speaking in Italian in the hope that some Italian students could translate it. The examination however was sometimes more challenging than I expected. The workload is fine if you decide to spread your exams. However, this is not always possible if you have to be back in your home country before a certain date. There was not a lot of lesson material. I would have appreciate it if teachers would put more information on their powerpoint slides so that we had a clear overview of what was expected from us for the exam.

g. What is the culture of the university?

E.g. How approachable are the lecturers, engagement with local students? What are the differences with WU?

The lecturers were very approachable. I did not really engage with local students as they already had their own friends at the university. This is very similar to the WUR.

h. What does the university offer students additionally?

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

There is a lot of catering around the university. There was also a library with many study spots.

5. Housing-traveling-living

a. What are the possibilities for housing?

E.g. Availability to sign up for a room on campus, private rooms, rent rates?

There are a lot of shared rooms available. However, if you want a private room you have to pay more than in Wageningen. For me it was hard to find something. In the

Netherlands, it is common to look for a room via facebook. This is not trustworthy in Florence as there are a lot of scammers. I would recommend to start looking for a room quickly and if necessary, even pay rent for a month beforehand to prevent the risk of not finding a place in time.

b. What is the culture like?

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

People are very friendly but a bit chaotic. I also had the idea that outside of the city centre, locals did not really like tourists. Not a lot of people speak proper English. In the city centre, there is a nice ambiance. The food is amazing and the city offers a lot of facilities.

c. 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 really cheap. You can buy tickets at the tabacchi stores, you cannot buy tickets at most bus stops and neither in the bus. However, the bus is not reliable. The tram is reliable and very cheap. I got an subscription to ridemovi, with this app I was able to rent bikes and scooters all over town. There are a lot of biking lanes.

6. Expenses

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

Category	Expenses
Travelling there	200
Visa - if applicable	-
Vaccinations - if applicable	-
Insurances (extra) - if applicable	-
Daytrips/sight-seeing	400
Housing costs per month & type of housing/accommodation	800
Grocery costs per month	160
Public transport costs per month	50?
Restaurant/going out for dinner costs per month	250

b. The price levels were in general [higher; lower; equal] in comparison to in the Netherlands:

In general, the prices were lower. Especially going out for a drink or dinner was cheap. Groceries were more expensive than I would have thought beforehand. For most products, the prices are comparable to the Netherlands but it depends on the season. In the summer, most fruits are very cheap. It also depends in which supermarket you do your groceries. There are a lot of city supermarkets, they are more expensive than the big supermarkets.

c. Additional remarks regarding expenses?

As you are not able to work there, I would set aside some money for e.g. trips.

7. Free time

a. What are must-sees in the area?

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

Cinque terre is a destination that I would really recommend.

b. What does not appear in a travel guide, but is definitely worth seeing/doing?

Fiesole, you have the best sight over Florence and there are nice hikes.

8. Challenges & best moment abroad

a. Any challenges? How did you deal with them?

It was hard to find a room. I got scammed and I discovered that pretty late.

b. Best memory?

I have so many. First of all, making friends and go out with them. I had so many great days with them, and we hung out at the nicest bars. My most memorable trip was to Cinque Terre.

9. Contact details

Is the reader allowed to contact the writer?	yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no <input type="checkbox"/>
Name & email address (if yes)	Eva van der Mijll Dekker, eva.vandermijlldekker@wur.nl	