

WUR Goes Abroad

# **1. Student Information**

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| Study programme WUR | Bsc Forest and Nature Conservation |
| Exchange semester (dd/mm/yyyy) | 07-09-2023 until 15-12-2023 |
| Exchange destination: University | University of Guelph |
| Faculty |  |
| Country | Canada |
| City | Guelph |

# **2. Motivation for exchange**

# Why did you choose to go on study exchange?

I wanted to have a unique experience, really take on an adventure, do something I was not used to doing, all by myself far from everything and everyone I knew. To get to know another culture, different people and just get more independence.

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

I was not ready to experience a completely different culture and language so I either wanted an English speaking country or some European country with a similar culture. University of Guelph had very interesting courses and seemed to be not the hardest to get in, even though my average grade was not extremely high for outside of Europe (7.2).

# **3. Accessibility to reach destination**

## Do you have any tips to reach your exchange destination? Travel with the fellow WUR outgoing to UofG students, or meet each other on the airport (Toronto) so you can take a taxi together to the University. Expensive, but by far the easiest to get there with the luggage.

# **4. University and studying**

## Could you provide some general information about the followed courses?

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|  | **Course** | **ECTS** | **Short description of the contents** | **Appreciation of course: 1(low) – 5(high)** | **Remarks** |
| **1** | GEOG\*1350 | 6 | Natural hazards | 4 | Very interesting but easy, no assignments just 3 exams |
| **2** | ENVS\*3250 | 6 | Forest diseases | 2 | Very strict about attendance etc. and microscopic, for me too much about small details |
| **3** | BIOL\*3450 | 6 | Aquatic environments | 5 | Broad about aquatic environments but quite a pace so keeps it interesting, learned a lot |
| **4** | ZOO\*4070 | 6 | Animal behaviour | 4 | Just interesting, quite broad about animals, very nice group work |
| **5** | BIOL\*4150 | 6 | Wildlife management (statistics) | 4 | Interesting, cool to learn but a bit more statistics than I expected and would have wanted |
| **6** |  |  |  |  |  |

## 

## What is it like to study there?

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

A bit easier than at the WUR and fewer contact hours, but many assignments so definitely need to spend more time and keep up with the course more than at the WUR.

## 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?*

I had many short lectures without breaks so engaging with other students was during lectures a bit hard. There were a lot of clubs to join and spots to ask for help and information, but that was a bit too much so you did not know when to go where. Lecturers are generally quite approachable.

## What does the university offer students additionally?

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

Residence on-campus, which is quite expensive, but a lot easier than finding your own off-campus. They have a mandatory bus pass for Guelph and many food possibilities on-campus. Both some actual restaurants and many food courts with fast food but also salad bar etc. With on-campus residence, free use of washing machines and drying machines for laundry is included. There are many sport facilities, but many are very competitive so not all are available.

# **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?*

On-campus residence, many options, some with a roommate, others without, some with many housemates, some only with a few, some with a kitchen and some without. If you are from outside Ontario and sign up on time, you are sure to get a room but not necessarily with all your noted preferences, although this usually is possible as well.

**What is the culture of the country like?**

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

Good and healthy food is expensive and difficult. Being a vegetarian is a pain, especially if you do not have a kitchen. They are far more polite than we are, so the ‘How are you?’ will always be exchanged, including with cashiers etc. instead of just a ‘hi’.

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

I do not remember cost of transport card, it is included in the university fee, I guess around 100 CAD for the Guelph card the entire semester. Uber is practical after going out, since the busses aren’t going then anymore. If you share with friends so the car is full, it’s only around 4 CAD per person. Further away in Guelph, beyond the centre, around 5. Biking is not really done.

# **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: 1000 euro? I did go without stops cause I preferred that so it can be a bit cheaper

Visa if applicable: 25 euro

Vaccinations if applicable:

Insurances (extra, if applicable): 100 CAD? Don’t exactly know anymore

Housing costs per month & type of housing/accommodation: around 700-800 euros a month, little house with 3 others and a kitchen

Groceries: 200 euro per month or something

Public transport: 100 CAD

Restaurant/going out for dinner: 30 euros

Daytrips/sight-seeing: 200 euros I think

**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?*

Niagara falls, all national parks in the surroundings, if you have money Vancouver and Montréal (in thanksgiving weekend/exam study time), Toronto, the on-campus arboretum, most of the time renting a car is easier but not if you are alone or with young people

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

Well I do not know what does not appear in a travel guide but stampede ranch on the far side of Guelph is great, a real country club with a bull you can ride.

Also Collingwood is great, and the hike up the mountain there, especially if there is snow when there is not much snow at a lower altitude in Guelph etc.

**Do you have general tips and tricks about leisure time?**

*E.g. recommendations for restaurants, going out?*

Most of the clubs in Guelph are a lot of fun, especially Frank & Steins, the attic/bad luck bar, stampede ranch, McCabe’s (pub)

Definitely join the Tuesday trivia nights at the campus pub and go to Pablo’s afterwards for fun games and chill time.

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

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

I had covid during the first week of classes so missed a lot right at the start. Apart from that, not much, but I did need to get used to the culture of my Indian housemates with having friends over all the time until late, so I learned to communicate my needs a bit better to them

**What is your best memory of your time abroad?**

Going to Collingwood for a weekend with 4 others, it was an amazing weekend of laughter and fun and a beautiful hike in the snow with ice shoes up the mountain there.

# **9. Contact details (optional)**

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| **Is the reader allowed to contact the writer?** | yes | no |
| **Name/e-mail** | sterre.pikaar@wur.nl | |