



WUR Goes Abroad

1. Student information

Study programme WU	BSc Environmental Sciences
Exchange semester (dd/mm/yyyy)	1 st of September until 31 st of March
Exchange destination: University	Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin
Faculty	Agricultural and Horticultural sciences
Country	Germany
City	Berlin

2. Motivation for exchange

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

After a year of hard work as program board member for the Netherlands-Asia Honours Summer School, I felt like going to study at a place where I would feel most at home. For me, that is Berlin!

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

I choose the city more than I choose the country. Berlin is not representative of Germany at all. It is super international and it attracts a diverse group of people.

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

The courses that Humboldt offers, were very fitting to my interest of soil sciences.

3. Accessibility to reach destination

a. Do you have any advice about reaching your exchange destination?

I choose to drive by car as I wanted to minimize the amount of stuff I had to buy in Germany. Going to car gave me the opportunity to bring my own pillows, blankets and cooking accessories. When I went back for a weekend to the Netherlands, I decided to bring the car back and go to Berlin by train. Going by train is the best way. Tickets are cheap when booked in advance and you can take the ICE from many different stations in the Netherlands.

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	Biodiversity & conservation management	6	Learning mostly about the social sciences aspect of the topic	5	Cool excursion, really tight group that this class becomes because it is a course taught on the weekend.
2	Soil and Water protection	6	Natural sciences mostly. You have to do a presentation and oral exam	4	Cool excursions, very broad topic. Perfect if you don't have a background in these topics.
3	Ecology Arts	5	Where science, social movements and perspective are intertwined in art	3	Super interesting course, the teacher's English was suboptimal unfortunately
4	Rekultivierung der Devastierende Landschaften	6	-German course- More on the chemistry side of contaminated soils	4	Amazing teacher, high quality content. Oral exam at the end and one presentation which can be performed in English.
5	Agroecosystems, Environment and Natural Resource Management	6	Cool collaboration with a research institute and taught by many different teachers	4	Collaboration with an agricultural university in Tokyo. Part of the exam was a presentation.

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

Yes, there are plenty of courses available for agricultural and environmental sciences within the masters Integrated Natural Resource Management. If you know German, there are many more courses to choose from.

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

Yes, my interest is specifically soil sciences, and I have chosen all of them. There is not more than this.

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

No, personally I don't think the quality of education is going to be better than the WUR for environmental sciences. I personally sought more relaxation in Berlin and that is what I had. There

were many presentations I had to do, but this didn't cost me too much effort. You can pass the classes easily. For these courses, you would have to do more self-study to get more out of it. This however, is not needed to pass.

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

Yes I am super satisfied, I think I have chosen all the right courses. I did enjoy them!

f. What is it like to study there?

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

With the courses I took, I still had a lot of free time. This is quite normal, is the perception that I had. A lot of people therefore have jobs on the side and not 'only' study.

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 university culture is great. There is a lot for students. The thing I enjoyed most about the student culture was going to the mensa (canteen), where you can get food really cheap!

h. What does the university offer students additionally?

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

There are plenty of sport facilities, you can get housing through a lottery system and there are language classes you can take to improve your German (this costs extra).

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 two places you could live, both are super far from campus. Mine was Allee der Kosmonauten in East Berlin. The other one is Adlershof. I really prefer mine as it was 30 min. biking to campus, a direct (slow) tram in front of the door to the central station and it was next to a small forest. However, it is far from every social activity and far from the supermarket (30 min. walking). Rent was as cheap as in Wageningen!

b. What is the culture like?

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

Can't ignore the clubbing scene. However, there are plenty of people that don't enjoy it as much as I do. The beautiful thing is, is that there is something for everyone. It is a big city, easy to get lost in. I

would really recommend using the first month to socialize. Having a few stable relationships the rest feel more stable as well.

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

At Humboldt you get a student card where you can travel freely for the whole month. Its included in the fee you pay for the semester. You can pay monthly to upgrade your card to a DB-bahn card which you can use for everything except for international trains throughout Germany

6. Expenses

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

Category	Expenses
Travelling there	35 euro for train one way when booked early
Visa - if applicable	no
Vaccinations - if applicable	no
Insurances (extra) - if applicable	Get your health insurance checked through a German health insurance
Daytrips/sight-seeing	20 euro club entrance
Housing costs per month & type of housing/accommodation	340 but I got an amazing deal
Grocery costs per month	250
Public transport costs per month	260 total for semester in berlin
Restaurant/going out for dinner costs per month	7 euro for a doner

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

a bit cheaper

c. Additional remarks regarding expenses?

-

7. Free time

a. What are must-sees in the area?

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

I actually did not leave Berlin my whole stay there.

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

My favourite place: Holzmarkt 25. Chess&Jazz every third Thursday of the month. World chess club is great too.

8. Challenges & best moment abroad

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

Have to say, I had a quite easy time. Many people however do experience it as lonely. That is why I suggest trying to acquire a few close connections first because I do understand it. The city is so big it is easy to get lost. Not a great place for people with FOMO because there is really just too much to do. Don't go too hard. Be gentle on your health.

b. Best memory?

Definitely the connections I have made, and it was amazing feeling completely myself. For every interest of mine, there is some activity related to it. I am obsessed with chess and there were so many things related to chess I could pursue.

9. Contact details

Is the reader allowed to contact the writer?	yes <input type="checkbox"/>	no <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Name & email address (if yes)		