



# WUR Goes Abroad

## 1. Student Information

<b>Study programme WUR</b>	Bachelor of Environmental Sciences
<b>Exchange semester (dd/mm/yyyy)</b>	25/09/2023 until 15/02/2024
<b>Exchange destination: University</b>	Università degli Studi di Padova
<b>Faculty</b>	Department of Geosciences; Department of Biology
<b>Country</b>	Italy
<b>City</b>	Padova

## 2. Motivation for exchange

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

I chose to do an exchange to experience a different education system, assimilate in a new culture and in general to step out of the Wageningen comfort zone.

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

I chose Padova because I wanted to do my exchange in Italy and Padova being a medium size, student city with a highly regarded university seemed like a perfect fit. I knew that the university is big enough to have a wide range of courses to choose from with a lively student atmosphere.

## 3. Accessibility to reach destination

### Do you have any tips to reach your exchange destination?

If coming from Western Europe or nearby countries you can get to Padova by bus or train quite easily as it is one of the major stops in Italy, but depending on the start location it might take some time. Alternatively, Padova is 1h bus away from the Venice airports which makes flying a good alternative.

## 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	APPLIED ECOLOGY AND ECOSYSTEM SERVICES	6	An overview of main current ecological problems and different approaches to ecosystem	4	

			management. A lot of example studies from the field to illustrate the content.		
<b>2</b>	COASTAL ENVIRONMENTS UNDER CLIMATE CHANGE	6	A broad look at bio-morpho dynamics of the coastal systems and how current climate change impacts the development of coasts. Mainly focus on Italian coast but mention of others as well. There were 2 field trips to Po river delta and Venice salt marshes.	4	
<b>3</b>	EARTHQUAKE GEOLOGY AND FAULT MECHANICS	6	An introduction of earthquake fracture development and propagation and focus on causes of these earthquakes. There was a field trip to Central Apennines.	5	
<b>4</b>	ENVIRONMENTAL BIOGEOGRAPHY	6	An introduction of the distribution of species and the reasons for these distributions. Separated between more flora and fauna orientated. There was a field trip to the local natural park.	3	
<b>5</b>	PAST CLIMATE AND CLIMATE CHANGE	6	An introduction of ancient climates, causes and effects on the global scale. Starting from 5 billion years ago till the last few thousand years.	5	
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### **What is it like to study there?**

*As I took courses from 3 different masters and every course structure and examination was different. A few courses were very broad and introductory and more discussion orientated while others were more typical lecture organized. This means that the workload is also highly dependent on if the course is very broad and more discussion based or more concentrated. Some courses have a single additional book recommended to better understand the course material while others have many additional research papers to read. In general studying the lecture slides is the most main part. Some separate courses may have lecture recordings but this is not common.*

The exams also differ, most are oral exams but written exams with a combination of open and multiple choice questions are also common. For some courses examination may be solely based on presentations or several smaller exams.

### **What is the culture of the university?**

*In general the lecturers were very forthcoming and supportive, especially for smaller optional track courses. Compared to WUR there was less interactive learning and engagement from the student (via questions, comments, discussions etc.). This is highly dependent on the course though.*

### **What does the university offer students additionally?**

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

*The university provides catering. With 5 euros you can get a full meal (there are also vegetarian options) at the cafeteria but it is a bit complicated to set up the student catering account.*

*The university has a sports facility with different activities and a gym. To join any sports related activities you need to get a approval from an Italian doctor that you are healthy, this costs usually around 30 euros and there is a list of English speaking doctors uploaded by the university on their website.*

*In general there are less social student clubs but ESN organizes some events for the international students.*

## **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?*

*The university dorms are for the non-eu students only. In general, it is very difficult to find a room and I would recommend starting to look for one 4-5 months before arrival latest. You can find rooms via the websites recommended by the university and Facebook. The double rooms (bedrooms shared with another person) are cheaper than private ones.*

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

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

*Compared to Wageningen Padova is more busy and dynamic, but also a bit louder. There is a large variety of different food and drink places to enjoy the local cuisine and atmosphere and also a lot a great bars to enjoy a nice coffee. The morning are at a slower pace compared to the evenings. During the winter there is little activity in the city but as the weather gets warmer the city becomes more dynamic again.*

*In general, the Italians tend to interact with other Italians so it might be bit difficult to connect to some people but Padova has a large international community so there tends to be a separation between the Italian and international students.*

**Could you give some information about public transport infrastructure?**

*E.g. Cost public transport card, taxi prices, how to travel to the university?)*

*It is most easy to get around the city by bike. In the centre it is easy to walk to places but outside the centre the city is spread out so having a bike is very comfortable. While there are a lot of bike lanes, they can be a bit non-structured so you always have to be a bit careful when biking.*

*There is also a good public transport system in the city. The students can get a monthly student transport card for around 30 euros.*

## 6. Expenses

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

*In general the housing for exchange students is more expensive than what I pay in the Netherlands. If you are staying there for a longer period (1 year) it is possible to find relatively cheap housing. Unfortunately, from what I have heard, the rent is much higher for short term contracts.*

*The groceries were a bit cheaper compared to the Netherlands but not significantly but eating out was quite affordable compared to the Netherlands.*

Ticket there: 100

Visa if applicable: -

Vaccinations if applicable: -

Insurances (extra, if applicable): 25 for the university insurance

Housing costs per month & type of housing/accommodation: 460 euros for private room in a private residence

Groceries: around 200-250 euros per month

Public transport: -

Restaurant/going out for dinner: for 5-6 euros can get a full meal

Daytrips/sight-seeing: around 20 euros per day trip

**Additional remarks regarding expenses?**

## 7. Free time

**What are must-sees in the area?**

*The Dolomite mountain range is only 2h away by train. If you have a love for the outdoors and mountains this is perfect. This requires a bit of planning as especially on weekends (Sundays are the most difficult) there is less transport. Near Padova there also*

*is the Colli Eugene natural park, 15min by train. This is great for a more casual hike. For a more relaxed but longer trip Lake Garda is definitely great, but can be a bit tourist full, especially the places accessible by train.*

*As for the cities and towns Bassano, Vicenza, Verona, Ferrara are some a bit smaller cities to visit. Of course Venice is very near by and is great for a day trip.*

*In general most places can be reached by train, but for cheaper tickets for cities like Ferrara, Bologna, Milan, Florence etc. I recommend checking the busitalia bus tickets or flixbus.*

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

For a day trip I recommend visiting house of Petrarca and the village around it, also Mantua as one of the important renaissance cities. Also a great day trip is to the Burano island near Venice, famous for the cozy, colourful houses and much less touristic compared to the Murano island.

If you are not afraid to plan a bit and find a good company I highly recommend staying a night in a bivacco, a little hut in the mountains open for anyone to stay for free. There are a lot of these houses in the mountains at different altitudes.

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

There are definitely a lot of great food places in Padova. Also there are a lot of great bars some with live music and also a lot of concerts.

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

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

*The main challenges was regarding the study system and exams. Some courses had mandatory attendance and as there is no recordings for most courses I took it was important that I attend the lectures. The exams varied widely, from a presentation of field trip and experiments to written exam to oral exam. Every course has a different evaluation type and some course may have 2 or more exams. This meant that I prepared for each exam differently, with written exam and presentations I did self-study of the course materials while for the oral exams I prepared with other coursemates and talked through the content of the lectures.*

*My biggest challenge was an exam I failed when taking it the first time. While the exam session last the whole January and February the 2<sup>nd</sup> session of the exams is usually at the end of February when I had to leave. To fix this I email some course professors as well as the main course coordinator and managed to do the exam on a earlier date. In general, most professors are forthcoming and willing to help.*

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

The best memories for me are connected to the time I spent with my friends in the mountains and the nature.

## 9. Contact details (optional)

<b>Is the reader allowed to contact the writer?</b>	yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no <input type="checkbox"/>
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