



WUR Goes Abroad

1. Student Information

Field of study in Wageningen	Environmental Sciences
Study period exchange (dd/mm/yyyy)	01-02-2023 until 12-07-2023
Country (exchange)	Spain
City (exchange)	Madrid
University (exchange)	Universidad Politécnica de Madrid
Faculty (exchange)	E.T.S.I. Montes, Forestal y Medio Natural

2. Motivation for exchange

Why did you choose to go on study exchange?

I mainly wanted to see how the education at Wageningen University differed from another university in Europe. But of course, I was also curious as to how the Dutch university culture differed from another countries' (in my case Spanish university). Meeting people and making connections was also a big part of it. And lastly, enjoying and learning plenty from another discipline than mine.

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

The reason I chose it was mainly for the language. I grew up speaking Spanish in my household, however it is a language I barely developed socially or academically, as I only spoke to family members in Spanish. The Polytechnic University of Madrid is known as one of the best, if not the best technical university in Spain. I took it as an opportunity to see what they had to offer for a curious outsider. I also had a friend that recommended this university to me, as she had just returned from her Erasmus at this exact university.

3. Accessibility to reach destination

Do you have any tips to reach your exchange destination? (E.g. bus, train, etc.)

The option I took was to fly over to Adolfo Suárez Madrid-Barajas Airport, which is the main airport of Madrid. And afterwards I took the Metro to go to the location of the accommodation I arranged. If one prefers to be sustainable, then it is of course better to go with the train over to Madrid, however there is a chance that this option is more expensive.

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	Gestión de Espacios Protegidos	6	Management of Protected Areas	5	Great course, even though it includes a lot of content, and you must memorize plenty of information. Great and complex course, and a hard exam.
2	Técnicas de restauración y conservación de suelos	4	Techniques of restauration and conservation of soils	4	A lot of very useful information regarding soil and how to restore it and avoid erosion. The exam however is almost impossible to pass.
3	Gestión de Especies Protegidas	5	Management of Protected Species	3	It was not a subject I was particularly interested in from the beginning. However, all the information is super detailed and well explained. Hard to pass.
4	Prevención y corrección de impactos sobre la fauna	4	Prevention and correction of impacts on fauna	3	The first half is just about a very wide variety of different species, and the second half about indicators. Not the most complex information. Easy to pass.
5	Prevención y corrección de impactos sobre sistemas acuáticos	6	Prevention and correction of impacts on aquatic systems	2	Very hard course, plenty of time has to be invested in this course. Very hard exam too.
6	Técnicas de restauración vegetal	5	Techniques of restauration of vegetation	2	Not per se complex, but very tailored to Spanish environment. Needed knowledge of GIS which I did not have.

How is the study formalized? (E.g. study forms, academic level, examination, workload, lesson material)

This university is all about the workload, one quite literally never gets a break for 5 straight months.

The teaching approach is old and the contents of the exam tended to be very specific, which could be annoying. Very high academic level. Most lecturers were great and interesting.

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?)

A lot of engagement between teachers and students, it is actually very common to ask for a tutorial after a class if one did not understand the contents of the lecture or practical, where the teacher can sit with you for up to 30 minutes inside their office and help you with whatever you need. The way the WUR does it is also very good. Over at the UPM there were no tutorials, but one had to ask for one. The WUR has them scheduled. The relationship between lecturers and students is a lot deeper there though, it could be because the classes were way smaller than in Wageningen.

What does the university offer the student additionally? (E.g. Catering, sports facilities, laundry facilities?)

Very good catering with good prices. No central sports facility like a gym. Football over there is very popular though. Not many sports associations like in the WUR. The classrooms were old and had outdated technology.

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 does not offer housing, but on their website they list many websites of companies that either provide housing or help you get housing. Prices can generally be pretty high due to it being the capital.

What is the culture of the country like? (E.g. Differences with home, local cuisine, habits, manners?)

Spanish people are a lot more open than Dutch people. They also tend to eat dinner a lot later, around 22:00. And afternoon naps are a must.

Could you give a general price indication of the place of residence compared to living in Wageningen?

I paid 490 euro a month, and in Wageningen I pay 480. However, I lived in a way smaller place.

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

Students pay 8 euro a month to move around Madrid. If you want to leave Madrid the prices begin going up (like for trains to go to other cities). Very cheap in Madrid though.

6. Free time

What are must-sees in the area? (E.g. nearby destinations, how do you prefer to travel, when to plan?)

There are many things to see in Madrid, a couple being: museo el Prado, templo de Debod, Plaza España, Gran Vía, Palacio Real, parque el Retiro are classic destinations.

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

Parque del Oeste is beautiful and not very much visited.

Do you have general tips and tricks about leisure time (E.g. recommendations for restaurants, going out?)

Restaurants are open till very late and usually are closed around 15-16. Going out begins late (1 AM) also and goes on till very late in the morning (7-8 AM)

7.Challenges & best moment abroad

What was a challenge you have experienced?

The workload of the UPM is crazy and I was not used to that type of education. I was always behind with a lot of the work, so I had to drop some courses to survive. But I adjusted to what I could handle and did alright.

What was your best memory abroad?

All the moments I had with my roommates were great. I really bonded with them. Going out with them was also the best.

8. Contact details (optional)

Is the reader allowed to contact the writer?	yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no <input type="checkbox"/>
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IF YOU DON'T SPEAK SPANISH THERE ARE NOT GOING TO BE MANY ENJOYABLE OPTIONS, I DO NOT RECOMMEND IT.