



WUR Goes Abroad

1. Student Information

Study programme WUR	BSc Animal Sciences
Exchange semester (dd/mm/yyyy)	02/10/2023 until 30/01/2024
Exchange destination: University	Warsaw University of Life Science
Faculty	Organic Agriculture and Animal Breeding
Country	Poland
City	Warsaw

2. Motivation for exchange

Why did you choose to go on study exchange?

In first instance, I wanted to go abroad for one semester during the first semester of the fourth year, either working or studying. I thought that it would be a very nice experience to live "far" from home for a longer timespan and that I could learn a lot from it.

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

After I decided to go on an exchange, I looked at the list of the universities where I could go to. In first, I did not think of Poland, but I looked at the courses given at every university, and Warsaw had one of the most interesting courses to me.

3. Accessibility to reach destination

Do you have any tips to reach your exchange destination?

I went to Warsaw by plane. There are two airports in Warsaw and one of them (Chopin) is quite close to the university (only one bus). I also heard people who went by train via Berlin, but this takes more than 14 hours.

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	International agricultural markets	2	First we had some lectures about the markets of different products, like milk, wine, wheat, etc. Afterwards we had to make a report about the market of a product of our choice.	3.5	
2	Plant protection management in organic agriculture	3	Divided into two parts: plants harmed by fungi and by insects. Both parts were divided into lectures and practicals.	2.5	
3	Agricultural technologies for organic farming	3	Lectures about cultivation of crops: e.g. no-tillage, irrigation, harvesting, use of pesticides. After the lecture we had a practical e.g. to look at the ploughs.	4	
4	Cropping system	4	About the production of crops like wheat or rye and we learned about the soil. We also went on a daytrip to look at the difference between ploughed and no-ploughed soil.	4.5	
5	Fertilization in organic system	3	Lectures and practicals about the chemistry of the soil. During the practicals, we calculated for example the amount of nitrogen and phosphorus in soils which were in different ways fertilized.	2.5	
6	Active nature conservation	5	We went on a weekend trip for three days to two national parks in Poland (Biebrza and Białowieża). We got a tour through the Białowieża forest where we looked at different trees and we went to a reserve to look at the animals which live in the Białowieża forest. Unfortunately, we did not see the animals in the wild.	5	
7	Game animal farming	3	Lectures about hare, deer, pheasant and partridge. We also went on a day trip to look at the game animals.	4.5	
8	Small ruminants production in Poland	3	Lectures about goat and sheep. We also went on a day trip to a farm of the university.	4.5	
9	Ecological aspects of food and nutrition	4	Lectures about the difference between organically and conventionally produced food.	4	

What is it like to study there?

I followed three courses with only Erasmus students (Active nature conservation, Game animal farming and Small ruminant production in Poland). These three courses were quite easy and we did not have a lot of contact hours. The other courses were in the faculty of Organic Agriculture and I followed these together with students who do their whole bachelor in Warsaw. These courses were much more difficult and I had to put more effort in this. However, I planned all the courses on Monday till Thursday, so I had weekend from Friday till Sunday, which was very convenient when I wanted to go for a weekend trip.

Overall, I think that the academic level and workload is lower than in Wageningen.

What is the culture of the university?

The culture of the university felt quite convenient to me. We had class with not so many people (6-18 people) so it felt quite personally. Furthermore, the teachers responded quite soon when I sent an email. The campus was large with a lot of grass in between, I really liked that. Like I said above, I had class together with local students so I also got to know some of them!

What does the university offer students additionally?

I lived in the dorms which were located at the campus and there was also a gym, swimming pool and a lot of canteens at the campus, so when you want, you don't have to leave the campus. Per one building of the dorms, there was one laundry room. We had to make an appointment to do our laundry, but it worked quite well for me.

5.Housing-travelling-living

What are the possibilities for housing?

When you apply to go to this university, you can sign up to live in the dorms. I think that everyone who wanted to live in the dorms had a room. The disadvantage was that I had a 2 person bedroom and we only had one desk and one chair. However, when I could choose again, I would choose to live in the dorms, because you get to know a lot of people and when there are activities, they are always close to the campus or we gathered at the campus. Furthermore, the price was quite low.

There is also the possibility to rent a private room, but this is much more expensive and for the people with a room outside of the campus it was "harder" to go to the activities or just drink a tea, so I saw them less often.

However, the centre is quite far from the campus (at least 30 minutes during the day by metro and over 45 minutes by bus during the night).

What is the culture of the country like?

In first, I did not have a very good feeling about Poland, I thought that a lot of Polish people were drunk a lot. However, the picture changed 180 degrees when I arrived there. The people are very polite and most of them also talk English (not the people at the reception of the dorms, but it was fine with google translate) which was very convenient. There was not a moment that I felt unsafe when I was in the city. Even in the middle of the night, I was not afraid of going home on my own. The food was also quite good. In the supermarket you can buy more or less as in the Netherlands, or at least what I bought.

Could you give some information about public transport infrastructure?

The public transport was good organised. Even when there was a lot of snow, it just drove. When you received the student card, you could buy a three month ticket for 140 zloty (which is around 30 euro). Tip: you need to pay in time for the student card so that you can collect it already when you arrive, I had to wait more or less on month until I received it. The taxi is also quite cheap, but I only used it one time.

6. Expenses

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

The prices are really lower than in the Netherlands. I did not really look at the prices because everything was quite cheap. The dorms were around 140 euro per month and diner in the city centre is doable for 10 euro.

Ticket there: Plane: 150 euro (but I bought it quite late because the university in Warsaw was quite late with the information).

Visa if applicable: -

Vaccinations if applicable: -

Insurances (extra, if applicable): -

Housing costs per month & type of housing/accommodation: 140 euro

Groceries: 20 euro per week

Public transport: 30 euro for 3 months

Restaurant/going out for dinner: 10-20 euro

Daytrips/sight-seeing: depends where you go and if you stay there for the night, but the public transport was 50% discount for (Polish) students.

Additional remarks regarding expenses?

7. Free time

What are must-sees in the area?

With some friends, I went to Lodz, Lublin, Gdansk, Krakow, Torun and Wroclaw. Furthermore, with ESN I went to Zakopane. To Zakopane, we went by (our own) bus but the other cities I went by train or Flixbus. Sometimes I planned one week before where I wanted to go the next weekend.

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

I did not read a travel guide, but I really liked Zakopane. That was my favourite trip, because we went to the mountains and there was snow everywhere!

Do you have general tips and tricks about leisure time?

I really recommend to go to the whole introduction week organised by ESN. In this week, you will meet a lot of people and I made friends for the whole semester. Furthermore, for going out, I recommend Cubano on Mondays (because it is free) and Wednesday MultiPub (30 zloty for entrance+free beer from 22-1 o'clock). For restaurants: In the old town are several restaurants which serve Polish food and there are also foodhalls which is nice when you are going out for dinner with a big group.

Furthermore, I went a lot of times to the café at the bibliotheka for coffee.

8. Challenges & best moment abroad

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

The biggest challenge for me was to actually go. Before I went to Poland, I did not have a very good view of the country and the people and I was a bit scared to go there on my own without knowing anyone. However, I found out that most of the Polish people are very friendly and in the first few days I met so many people, which I really liked. After all, I am really glad that I went on exchange and I would recommend everyone to do something like this!

What is your best memory of your time abroad?

My best memory is all the people I met during this exchange. I really enjoyed it! Furthermore, I think that Warsaw is a very nice place to study, the city is not very touristic but it is interesting because of its history. Warsaw is also quite central within Poland, so it is quite easy to go for day or weekend trips by public transport.

9. Contact details (optional)

Is the reader allowed to contact the writer?	yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no <input type="checkbox"/>
Name/e-mail	Annika Rijlaarsdam Annika.rijlaarsdam@wur.nl	