



WUR Goes Abroad

1. Student Information

Study programme WUR	Voeding en Gezondheid
Exchange semester (dd/mm/yyyy)	21/08/2023 until 14/01/2024
Exchange destination: University	Swedish University of Agricultural Science (SLU)
Faculty	Business Administration & Environmental Psychology
Country	Sweden
City	Uppsala

2. Motivation for exchange

Why did you choose to go on study exchange?

I thought it would be a good addition to my educational programme, as well as a good way to challenge myself within a new setting and create new amazing life experiences.

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

Course availability, I like Sweden, the university is highly rated, I got accepted here.

3. Accessibility to reach destination

Do you have any tips to reach your exchange destination?

Be sure to have a creditcard handy (your own or parent) since all the payment for public transport through the app is done with Swish or creditcard. Swish is a form of only payment only for people with a Swedish personal number so it's down to the credit card. Also, try to download the app before arriving since making an account can take a while. This made it very hard when finally wanting to use the app. You can buy tickets in the bus, but you still don't know which bus to take without the app. For Uppsala is was UL (yellow colour).

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	Place, Health and Human Development	15	Theories on place attachment and the effect of the environment on human development.	4	
2	Management Perspectives of Sustainable Food Systems	15	Theories on management and sustainability within food systems.	5	This course has a lot of guest lectures from the work environment (putting the theories in the world)
3					
4					
5					
6					

What is it like to study there?

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

The studies here are a lot more based on literature readings. The academic level is high, and the lesson material is generally well structured. For me the workload started out very low, but ended up high since I did not follow the normal structure of the courses. Generally, the workload is a bit lower than Wageningen, but because the main theory was different from my background, the workload to keep up was similar to Wageningen.

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?

The lecturers could be mandatory or not mandatory but it many people go anyways. It was difficult to connect with Swedish people, but some really tried to open up to exchange students. My courses were a lot of foreign students so they kind of had to, but at the university itself it was a bit more difficult to connect with Swedish people. There were however more than enough exchange students to socialize with. The campus is similar to the WUR, which made it easier to feel at home. The teachers were very open and the staff was really happy to help.

What does the university offer students additionally?

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

There is a gym on campus, as well as multiple restaurants with cheap ish food options. There are showers in university buildings and there is a lot of space outside the restaurants to sit and eat lunch or catch up with friends. There are also small kitchen areas with microwaves where you can heat up your lunch. The university buildings are peanut free, so you are not allowed to eat anything with peanut inside the buildings to accommodate people with an allergy (which was amazing for me).

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?

There were a lot of options for housing, you had the option to enter preferences like "own kitchen" or "shared housing" or anything like that. The housing office would try to accommodate those preferences, but there is no guarantee. There are shared corridors, houses with one or 2 roommates and private rooms for as far as I know.

What is the culture of the country like?

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

One thing that I noticed was that every took their shoes off before entering a home. EVERYONE. Furthermore, Swedes are very polite. They also have this thing, Fika, which is like a coffee break, and they are VERY serious about it. But it is very fun so that was a nice thing to do with friends. Even in some seminars we had some fika provided by the teacher. The cuisine is very much meat based. I was surprised at how little vegetarian stuff there is, and what there is, is mostly vegan. They also have a lot of vegetables from the season, so the prices change a lot during the year, as well as the things they sell. Also, the stores are sooooo much bigger. Almost all the supermarkets are so big!

Could you give some information about public transport infrastructure?

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

Public transport was not free, but after acquiring a student card, there was a discount. The public transport was very weird for me as a dutchy because they work with zones and time and not with the ride ridden. They also have different companies working in different provinces, which made it very difficult to understand when you needed to have which ticket. After a while you got used to it, but there was not a lot of information about how it worked and there was also no explanation provided by the university (which would have been nice). There are several buses that go to the university, but the months when there was no snow, I biked there. This was very common to do, and not very far from my accommodation, so that is a real tip.

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: flight retour: 275 euro

Visa if applicable: No

Vaccinations if applicable: No

Insurances (extra, if applicable): health and travel insurance from home

Housing costs per month & type of housing/accommodation: 470 euro (higher, but also nicer apartment, compared to similar room in Wageningen slightly lower)

Groceries: 200 euro (higher)

Public transport: 70 euro (depends if you have student travel, then higher, otherwise lower)

Restaurant/going out for dinner: 1 person around 50/60 euro, but I'm not sure

Daytrips/sight-seeing: depends where, but generally 20 ish euro (I'd say the same)

Additional remarks regarding expenses?

In general, it came out a bit higher than the Netherlands, but I honestly expected it to be a lot worse. Mostly the groceries and things like musea in Stockholm were expensive, but then again public transport a whole lot less than paying in the Netherlands.

7. Free time

What are must-sees in the area?

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

STOCKHOLM. Period. That city is so beautiful and pretty. From Uppsala goes a direct train that takes about an hour and is 25 crones for one way (about 2 euros), but if you buy a day ticket for about 11 euros you can take every bus, tram and ferry in the city during the 24 hours. Take the ferry at least once, and try to do it when it is sunny. There are 2 important apps for public transport. UL and SL. UL is for Uppsala and SL is for Stockholm. With those two you get quite far.

Another destination, which is way closer is the castle and the cathedral in Uppsala. Both are so beautiful and from the castle you have a very nice view over the city.

In the winter you can ski in Sunnersta at Sunnerstabacken. Renting and a ticket for 2 hours costs about 40 euros and it is like skiing in snowworld but with an amazing view (The pistes are not amazing but still worth it for a few hours). I travelled mostly with buses, but if you want to go outside the cities, a car is a bit of a necessity. There are not a lot of buses going to places outside the city like nature reserves or lakes or something like that. Sweden is very much car based, so within the cities buses are fine, but outside a car is very handy.

Last but not least, IKEA. When in Sweden, go to IKEA once. There is one in the city, maybe 15 minutes with the bus, it is so much fun!

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

The lake in Sunnersta. It is very pretty, definitely at sunrise or sunset. Otherwise the park in Uppsala, Svandammen, is also very nice. There are also a lot of forest and nature reserves in the area which are definitely worth a visit.

Do you have general tips and tricks about leisure time?

E.g. recommendations for restaurants, going out?

If you want to have access to a lot of parties, join one of the nations in Uppsala. Those are comparable with a dutch student union. Otherwise definitely join the student union from SLU, ultuna studentkar (I don't really know how to get the Swedish letters). This is like a student associations with a few parties, but definitely worth it. For restaurants I don't really have much, since I did not eat out much. But there are many nice cafes in Uppsala for a fika.

8. Challenges & best moment abroad

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

One of the first things I encountered was the difficulty with the public transport. I did not understand how it worked and it confined me to a small area of where I understood it. I overcame this by constantly asking people on how it worked and asking for advice. One of the other things that I encountered was connected to this, which was the student card. In Sweden they have the "mecenat" card with is your valid student ID but in order to get the travel discount, you had to have more than 75% study load. In the beginning of the exchange I started with 50% and later on I added a second course, making it 150%, still 30 credits in the semester. I was still eligible, but there was a lot of difficulty with getting the right certification for student discount on travel. This took a lot of emailing and explaining but after a while it was fixed. I also had a few times where I was quite homesick, especially when I had the flu. In that moment I was wondering how I would do it, but relying on friends I made at my housing complex and just trying to take care of myself, I got through it.

What is your best memory of your time abroad?

I think my best memory has to be the Lapland trip with the student union. It was basically all exchange students and a lot of my friends and it was just 5 days of fun, little sleep in the bus, insane view and experiences and just generally unforgettable.

9. Contact details (optional)

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