



WUR Goes Abroad

1. Student Information

Study programme WUR	Bachelor Communication and Life Sciences
Exchange semester (dd/mm/yyyy)	12/08/2023 until 18/12/2023
Exchange destination: University	Toronto Metropolitan University
Faculty	Sociology
Country	Canada
City	Toronto

2. Motivation for exchange

Why did you choose to go on study exchange?

I chose to go on exchange to become more confident and independent, and to develop my English speaking and writing skills. Additionally, I love to travel and getting to know different cultures while meeting new people.

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

I chose Canada because it is (partly) an English-speaking country, and it is generally known as very safe and multicultural. The nature in Canada also attracted me, as I love to hike and take pictures. Lastly, the culture is very Western so I thought it would be less of a culture shock if I went on exchange to this country.

3. Accessibility to reach destination

Do you have any tips to reach your exchange destination?

Not really, the only way Toronto was reachable for me was by plane. I do recommend booking a two-way ticket though, as it is often less 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	Sociology of food and eating (SOC808)	6	This course reviews how the food system is organized and how it affects people's food choices, the food system, and social and economic structures.	5	It is a really interactive course, and I learned a lot while also having a lot of fun.
2	Social Class and Inequality (SOC203)	6	The course examines the distribution of power and wealth in society.	3	The lesson material was very interesting, but the lectures and reading material were a little confusing sometimes as they did not match the questions that were asked in the tests at times.
3	Popular Culture (SOC202)	6	The course examines different ideas about popular culture (social media, tv, music, celebrities) and how they inform our personal politics, consumption practices, and common-sense ideas about the world.	4	The lectures were very interesting, and the lecturer is very enthusiastic and engaging.
4	Sociology of Fun (SOC478)	6	The course examines the different meanings and dimensions of fun and how it is applicable in society.	4	The lesson material was very interesting, and the essay was fun to write as my topic was something I was very interested in.
5	Media and Images of Inequality (SOC525)	6	The course examines the relationship between the representation of inequality on film and television and contemporary social structure.	4	The course was very fun and we analysed a lot of clips and films during the lectures. The things I learned during this course are also very recognizable in everyday life.
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What is it like to study there?

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

The academic level honestly felt a little less difficult to me than at the WUR, as the tests were mainly composed of multiple-choice questions. But the workload was a lot more, I

had to write lots of assignments, essays, and post-class discussions. The lesson material was very fun and not too heavy, as the most important parts were discussed in the PowerPoint slides during lectures.

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 culture is very welcoming, all the lecturers try to help the students as best as they can. They also make time for questions or other appointments. The engagement with local students is also very good, as many events are being organised each week. I think this is similar to the WUR.

What does the university offer students additionally?

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

Students can make use of the gym and the swimming pool, the library, and some cafes.

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?

International students who are staying for less than a year cannot rent a room on campus and they have to search for something off-campus. I used Airbnb to find an apartment.

What is the culture of the country like?

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

The cuisine was the most shocking part for me, as many foods were very unhealthy and less fresh compared to food in the Netherlands. The food was also very expensive, especially because I had to give a tip each time I bought food somewhere. The people were all very polite, open, and welcoming though and everyone asked how you were doing all the time.

Could you give some information about public transport infrastructure?

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

The public transport is very good as you can travel throughout the whole city with the TTC. One ticket costs 3.30 Canadian dollars and is usable for 2 hours, this ticket can be used for any vehicle that is labelled with TTC (bus, subway, streetcar). I took a monthly subscription (Presto Card) that costed around 120 dollars, so I could travel unlimited with my card. The trains are not a part of this though, and you have to buy separate tickets if you want to use the train. You can go from Union Station to Pearson Airport with the train for around 7 dollars, and from Union Station you can travel to your accommodation by subway. The taxi is also very good and I mostly used Lyft or Uber, both were pretty cheap.

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: around 1300 euros

Visa if applicable: around 7 dollars

Vaccinations if applicable:

Insurances (extra, if applicable): mandated health insurance around 200 dollars

Housing costs per month & type of housing/accommodation: around 1100 euros for a two-bedroom apartment

Groceries: higher in comparison to the Netherlands

Public transport: lower in comparison to the Netherlands

Restaurant/going out for dinner: equal

Daytrips/sight-seeing: equal

Additional remarks regarding expenses?

7. Free time

What are must-sees in the area?

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

- Niagara Falls, bus-tour or rent a car.
- Algonquin Park, bus-tour.
- CN-tower, walk or subway.
- Bluejays baseball game, walk or subway.
- Ripley's Aquarium, walk or subway.
- Royal Ontario Museum, walk or subway.
- Eaton Centre, walk or subway.
- High Park, subway (line 2).
- Korea Town, subway (line 2).
- Saint Lawrence Market, walk or subway.

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

Explore more places in North America like New York City, Banff national park, Quebec, or Vancouver if there is time during a vacation or study week.

Do you have general tips and tricks about leisure time?

E.g. recommendations for restaurants, going out?

- Look at the reviews before going somewhere.
- Use google maps to see which public transport is the best option to get to a destination.

Recommendation restaurant:

- *Red Lobster*
- *Poutine (many restaurants)*
- *Korean Grillhouse*
- *Gyubee*
- *There are also a lot of good restaurants in China Town.*

8. Challenges & best moment abroad

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

I had to get used to the city life, as I am from a small village. I was not used to loud noises and busy places everywhere. I overcame it by talking with my parents and roommate, and by just walking around and taking my time while slowly getting used to the atmosphere.

What is your best memory of your time abroad?

The best memory for me is making friends from all over the world and spending time with them.

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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