



WUR Goes Abroad

1. Student Information

Study programme WUR	Communication & Life Sciences (BCL)
Exchange semester (dd/mm/yyyy)	25-09-2023 until 15-12-2023
Exchange destination: University	University College London (UCL)
Faculty	Institute of Epidemiology and Health Care
Country	United Kingdom
City	London

2. Motivation for exchange

Why did you choose to go on study exchange?

Mostly, because of the university. An exchange in general really would contribute to my personal development as a whole, because of the international experience, in different cultures. Interacting with different cultures helps you develop new perspectives on the world, resulting in a more open mind.

Nevertheless, UCL stood out for me as it is ranked among the best universities in the world, and I wanted to learn from the best. Besides, UCL was ranked among the top universities in the political sciences, a domain of science I wanted to learn more about, knowing I wanted to do the Master Governance of Sustainability Transformations, at the WUR.

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

Ranked among the best. Besides, I was also enthusiastic about the fact that I was able to go there by train instead of an airplane. Furthermore, the fact that they speak English there, took away any language barriers.

3. Accessibility to reach destination

Do you have any tips to reach your exchange destination?

Go by train. It is better for the planet and, really important, you can take way more luggage with you to England. Besides, if you book your ticket well on time, it won't be too 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	Acute and Chronic Infectious Diseases	7.5	This module aims to provide an understanding of acute and chronic infections, and the diseases that they cause, resulting in a significant health and economic burden. Throughout the module, learning will adopt a population health approach as well as to public and individual health policy. Teaching will relate not only to UK infectious disease epidemiology but also to other global regions	4	Not enough depth in the content, in my opinion, but a very clear course. I did learn a lot. Besides, we were not only graded with an essay, but with a presentation as well, and I think that is a good thing.
2	Child and Adolescent Public Health	7.5	Child and Adolescent Public Health' is a module aiming to provide you with an understanding of the development and implementation of Public Health Programmes for children and young people using the Healthy Child Programme (HCP) from England as a model. Learning will adopt a population health approach. Although the teaching will focus on the HCP, international comparisons will be made. The module is designed to provide you with an introduction to the Universal Public Health Programme for 0-19 years olds (The Healthy Child Programme - HCP).	4	Very interesting to learn about public health programmes for children. It really does make you look further into the Dutch system/organisation as well. Nevertheless, again, there wasn't enough depth to the content, because we discussed different parts of child health each week.
3	Law and Governance in Contemporary China	7.5	The module shall focus primarily on the study and understanding of Chinese law and system of governance as found in the People's Republic of	5	Best course ever. In 11 weeks I learned to comprehend most of the Chinese system of governance, a system very different from our European

			China since 1979. The module shall examine, the evolution and the main features of China's legal system and sui generis system of governance, sources of law, law making and court system, and the role of law in China's economic development, among other things. The module shall also examine selected key areas including, constitutional law, legal institutions, business law, and competition law. During classes, current affairs will be discussed and analysed. All readings will be in English. The module presumes no prior knowledge of the Chinese language; however, students may be expected to familiarise themselves with Chinese legal terms.		systems of governance. Very interesting to learn more about a 'new' world power. The way in which the professor delivered the lectures was amazing. I learned so much in such a short period of time.
4	Regulating Big Business	7.5	This module is designed to help students understand how business regulation operates in domestic and global contexts. We examine the foundational reasons for why government intervenes in market economies, as well as how regulatory agencies are designed, created and maintained. We look closely at the nature of regulatory standards and how they are shaped, and we examine how business organisations understand and comply with regulations. Additionally, we examine environmental regulatory tools, such as carbon taxes and cap and trade programs to understand how they are designed and how effective they are in reducing the incidence of pollution.	4	Fun to do, however, the relevance missed, in my opinion. It was really interesting to learn more about Google and Amazon, however, I did not understand what this course was about for weeks (this normally does not happen). In the end I did learn some things, but I do not know how to use this knowledge in the future.

What is it like to study there?

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

I expected a much higher academic level, however, it wasn't that hard. Notably, I had to hand in my essay AFTER my stay abroad ended at UCL, and this was not mentioned before. Consequently, I had to write 4 essays, resulting in 30 ECTS, in 2 weeks. It was not possible to write them before, because the essay description was released at the end of my stay abroad. For that reason, the examination felt weird.

Furthermore, I had all 4 courses at the same time, but I only had 10 hours in class, on average. A lot of extra reading was prescribed, however, this wasn't a part of the essay in the end. For that reason, the time I spend reading beforehand felt useless. At the WUR, a lot is mandatory. At UCL, almost nothing was mandatory; for example, you did not have to prepare for classes.

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?

UCL really is a world community. UCL is known for its diverse and international community, which is something I can most certainly confirm. For example, more than half of its current students are not from the UK originally. Consequently, UCL felt as a good representation of the world population. This definitely contributed to my experience. I never felt as an outsiders.

Besides, you did not have very close contact with your lectures. Teachers at the WUR are more easy to approach. For example, if I wanted to ask something about the assignment, the lecturers almost never gave any advice, which is very different from the WUR.

What does the university offer students additionally?

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

A LOT. The university offers societies, sport clubs, mental health support, personal tutors, etc. In short, you could have a full week of activities, without ever leaving the university. Nevertheless, the WUR's introduction week is way (!!) better, because you really get to know other students. UCL's introduction week was more for the individual, instead of a group of students. For that reason, it was harder to make friends.

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?

I expected it to be very hard. During the informative lectures it was mentioned that I needed to find a private accommodation, because I was only in London for a couple of months; finding a private accommodation would be very difficult in London. Besides, I signed up for a UCL accommodation and I thereby needed to write more about my

preferences, such as a double or single room. I did not expect to get a room there. Nevertheless, I did receive a room in a UCL accommodation, which was only a 15-minute walk from the Big Ben! I think, as long as you are willing to pay a lot in London, I paid around 1000 pounds per month, you can find a room. This is because, the university allocates its rooms to exchange students and first-years.

What is the culture of the country like?

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

First of all, I think that London is way different than the rest of the country. For that reason, I will tell you more about London itself.

I felt like London embraces its multiculturalism, evident in its diverse neighbourhoods, cultural festivals and cuisines. Every culture there is on the earth, has a place in London, which is something I really liked.

Furthermore, London has a great history, but, according to the Londoners, London can always be greater. For that reason, the city is always under construction. The political values, however, are way more conservative than our own values. For example, migrants aren't as tolerated there as they are here. Furthermore, the social safety is lacking.

I could tell about London for hours. I cannot summarise its culture in such a short paragraph. London is simply amazing; a filmset.

Could you give some information about public transport infrastructure?

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

I travelled to the campus by tube. This was quite expensive. For each commute within zone 1, the only zone I had to be in, I paid 2.70 pounds, almost 3 euro. In the end, the public transport was way more expensive than expected, because I was not able to get a student card, because of my short stay. Nevertheless, the Tube goes every 2 to 3 minutes, so travelling around the city is EASY.

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: The train was doable. I expected to pay a lot more.

Visa if applicable: -

Vaccinations if applicable: -

Insurances (extra, if applicable): I could use my Dutch one

Housing costs per month & type of housing/accommodation: More than 1200 euro's per month (!!). It really was expensive, and I do not think that it could have been much less; this really is the price you have to pay.

Groceries: More expensive

Public transport: More expensive

Restaurant/going out for dinner: Not that expensive

Daytrips/sight-seeing: Museums are free! Nevertheless, other things are really expensive

7. Free time

What are must-sees in the area?

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

Tower of London, Houses of Parliament, Hyde Park, Thames River Cruise, Greenwich, Borough market, Tate Modern, Sky Garden, Scala (club), etc → There is TOO much!

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

Primrose Hill, Hyde Park Winter wonderland, British library.

Do you have general tips and tricks about leisure time?

E.g. recommendations for restaurants, going out?

ChatGPT is great! It really gives a clear overview of things you can see in a certain area. Furthermore, make a long list of things that you have heard about. Maybe, you are able to combine those into a longer day!

8. Challenges & best moment abroad

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

I think making friends was the hardest, something I did not experience before. The university really did not help. Nevertheless, I invested a lot of time and energy into my flatmates and that turned out great! Furthermore, I found Dutch friends, which was nice, because it was nice to feel a bit more at 'home' sometimes.

Besides, taking care of yourself for weeks is quite exhaustive. For example, I did not have any cooking material at first. Spend some time taking care of yourself, buying cooking material, making nice things. It does take more time to feel at home in another country.

What is your best memory of your time abroad?

Showing my family/Dutch friends 'my' city. For months I had lived in London, but when my family came to visit me, I realized how much I had learned and developed the last few weeks. London felt more and more like home. For example, my running track felt as MY running track. Running through such a city was amazing.

9. Contact details (optional)

Is the reader allowed to contact the writer?	yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no <input type="checkbox"/>
Name/e-mail	1luukvermeulen@gmail.com	