



WUR Goes Abroad

1. Student Information

Field of study in Wageningen	Biologie
Study period exchange (dd/mm/yyyy)	16/01/2023 until 04/06/2023
Country (exchange)	Sweden
City (exchange)	Umeå
University (exchange)	Umeå Universitet
Faculty (exchange)	Psychology and Physics

2. Motivation for exchange

Why did you choose to go on study exchange?

The main reason for me to go on exchange was to experience living in another country.

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

I have always been intrigued by Sweden and an exchange semester is the perfect opportunity to explore the country. My other university choices were in the same area, so for me, the country was more important than the university.

3. Accessibility to reach destination

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

It is possible to reach Umeå by train, car, or plane. If you have the time, I would recommend going by train, as it is the most sustainable option. However, the plane is much faster and probably cheaper. The best option is to go to Stockholm by plane and then to Umeå by train.

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	Developmental Psychology	7.5	Psychology of children and attachment processes	4	Very interesting course. Doable without a psychology background
2	Arctic Science	4.5	Everything about the Arctic, from the northern lights to surviving the cold	5	Amazing course, with interesting and varying topics, and a wonderful trip to Kiruna!
3	Data preprocessing and visualisation	7.5	Using R and Python to process and present data files.	4	Project-based course, very useful for future courses/activities
4					
5					
6					

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

The courses were focused on learning through lectures rather than practical or group work. The level and workload are similar to what I'm used to at the WUR. Two courses had a practical examination (essays/papers) and the other course had an online written exam. All the lesson material was online, but every course had recommended books which you could buy, or borrow from the library.

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?)

Teachers are approachable, just like in Wageningen. The classes are not too big, so the teachers usually know you (if you actively participate during the lectures). However, it is hard to connect with the local (Swedish) students, as they prefer to stay within their own 'bubble'.

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

There is a very big sports facility, IKSU. The membership is pricey, but it has everything. From swimming to climbing to group yoga and dance classes. There are some cafes on campus where you can buy snacks/lunch/dinner. The campus itself is very convenient, because it is close to the hospital and the labs, and all the buildings are connected through glass bridges and tunnels. This is great, especially in winter when it's too cold outside.

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?)

Housing is through the university's housing office. Once the application to the university is completed, you get an account for a housing website, which you can use to sign up for rooms. All

exchange students get rooms in corridors with shared kitchens and private bathrooms. The rooms are very decent. Of course, it is possible to look for housing through Facebook as well, but this is much more difficult. The rent is similar to the rent in Wageningen, if not a bit cheaper.

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

Swedes are a bit introverted, so it can be hard to join an already existing friend group. Once you get to know them, they are very open-minded and kind. The overall culture is not very different from the Dutch culture, but everyone in Sweden minds their own business, whereas in the Netherlands people sometimes tend to get nosy. Also, groceries are more expensive in Sweden compared to the Netherlands.

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

The prices are similar. I paid 3500 SEK a month for my 20 sq. ft. room.

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

Most student areas are located close to the university, so the majority of students travel on foot. Some have a bicycle, but those are useless in winter. The bus is cheap, 16 SEK per ticket. Taxis are a bit more expensive. For a ten-minute ride, you pay around 200 SEK. Scooters provided by Ryde are also a popular option in summer, but you pay around 80 SEK for 20 minutes.

6. Free time

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

I highly recommend using the train to go to the north and the south of Sweden. In the south, you can visit Uppsala and Stockholm, and from Stockholm other cities like Gothenburg and Malmö. In the north, you can go to Luleå, Kiruna, Abisko, and Narvik. From Narvik, the beautiful Lofotes are pretty close. The train rides are long, but not expensive. The prices depend on the season and time of day. In the area around Umeå, you can find many stunning lakes and forests.

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

The many public barbeque spots and benches on the riverside.

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

Umeå has many student pubs and clubs, so those are worth a visit if you want to party.

7.Challenges & best moment abroad

What was a challenge you have experienced?

The long nights in the winter and the long days in the summer can be hard. Over time, you get used to it. And I had to fall a lot of times before I finally put the spikes under my shoes.

What was your best memory abroad?

The people, the nature, the travels.... What I will miss the most though are the sunsets. So far north the sun sets slowly, so the sky has beautiful colours every day for many hours. Idem for the sunrises, but those are very early, in summer the sun rises at 2:30 AM.

8. Contact details (optional)

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