



# WUR Goes Abroad

## 1. Student Information

<b>Study programme WUR</b>	Nutrition and Health
<b>Exchange semester (dd/mm/yyyy)</b>	06/09/2023 until 24/01/24
<b>Exchange destination: University</b>	Catholic University of Valencia (UCV)
<b>Faculty</b>	Faculty of psychology
<b>Country</b>	Spain
<b>City</b>	Valencia

## 2. Motivation for exchange

### Why did you choose to go on study exchange?

I never really had the ambition to travel much, because I always thought it was kind of scary to travel on my own to an unfamiliar place. After talking to several people in Wageningen who went on exchange I realised that this would be the perfect opportunity to experience living in another country, while not being completely on my own. I would still be connected to a university and meeting people through classes and Erasmus activities. So after considering this I decided that I wanted to go on exchange.

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

I wanted to go to Valencia in Spain, because I really liked the city. It is close to the beach and has a big city centre. I never lived in a big city before so I really wanted to experience what that was like. Of course, the nice weather in Spain was also a bonus.

## 3. Accessibility to reach destination

### Do you have any tips to reach your exchange destination?

Valencia is only two and a half hours by plane, but travelling by train is also a good possibility for the people who prefer that. Overall, Valencia is reachable in multiple ways.

## 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	Sleeping disorders	6	Course about sleep as a behavior. Several topics are discussed in this course, for example the mechanisms behind sleep, the consequences of sleep deprivation and the symptoms of the most common sleeping disorders.	5	I really liked this course. The difficulty level was similar to Wageningen and the material was very interesting. I learned a lot.
2	The psychology of motivation and emotion	6	Discusses the study of motivational and emotional processes and behaviors that develop them. Students will get a better view on what motivation really is and the role of emotions in our daily lives.	2	I found that the material of the course was a little bit basic. It all was pretty obvious to me, but the teacher had a nice take on the classes.
3	Psychology of groups	6	Course about the formation and dynamics of groups. Students will learn more about processes of interaction and intergroup structures. Different group phenomena will be discussed.	4	The teacher who taught this course was really nice. In addition, the interactive games performed during the semester were fun.
4	Sport and exercise psychology	6	Course about the main concepts and models of the field of sports psychology. Students will come across different problems and difficulties that sport psychologists deal with in their work for example, sports in different age groups, motivational processes involved, and exercise	3	I expected the course to talk more about the psychology behind sports and how exercise is a way to relieve stress. This was actually not the case. The course really talks about the work of a sports psychologist and what that entails. So keep that in mind when enrolling for this course.

### **What is it like to study there?**

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

The classes at the UCV are different compared to the WUR. Mostly because the amount of students per class is really small. It felt more like being in high school. The classes were taught in classrooms instead of lecture halls, which I actually really liked, because it made socializing with other students a lot easier. The academic level of the courses I did was lower compared to what I am used to from the WUR. The courses were not really challenging, except for the sleeping disorders one. The workload was therefore also not that high. During the semester I didn't have to do a lot for the courses. Studying for my exams at the end of the semester, on the other hand, took up some time. The exams were very doable. They took one hour and were a multiple choice.

### **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 teachers are all really approachable and nice. They were interested in learning a bit more about their international students. During classes they allowed a lot of discussion and there was always enough time to ask questions, which I appreciated. Every class was a combination of international and local students, which allowed for some interaction with the Spanish culture. As I said before the classes were a lot smaller compared to the WUR. The way of teaching, on the other hand, was pretty similar. Every teacher made use of PowerPoint to teach their materials.

### **What does the university offer students additionally?**

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

The university offered some sports facilities, but I didn't do anything with that. Except for sports facilities they didn't offer much else. I didn't think this was a problem though, because the city itself has a lot of things to offer.

## **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?*

In Valencia there are a lot of different reliable organizations that offer student housing. I found my room in one day. There are no rooms on campus that they offer, but there is a lot of different student housing through the city. These accommodations offer mostly private rooms with a shared kitchen and multiple bathrooms. The rent rates differ a lot depending on the part of the city. The city centre is more on the expensive side, but the student neighbourhoods can be relatively cheap.

### **What is the culture of the country like?**

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

Spanish culture is different from the Dutch culture in multiple ways. The people there are a little more relaxed and also less structured in my opinion, which makes coming late to class not such a problem ;). The daily rhythm in Spain is later than in the Netherlands. With that I mean that people get up and stay up later. They eat around 9 or 10 o'clock. People also go to parties later. In Valencia the most popular dishes to eat were tapas or

paella, which are two things you don't eat a lot in the Netherlands, but that makes going out for dinner even more fun. Overall, the products in the supermarket are very similar to the products you can get in Dutch supermarkets.

**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 during my stay in Valencia was free. This was a special arrangement offered by the government for people under the age of 30. But even under normal circumstances, public transport is not expensive. A bus ride for example, costs 1.50 euros. I could travel to my faculty of the university by metro. I took only 15 minutes to get there. Every university in the city had multiple buildings, which is something to keep in mind when looking for a room to stay in during your Erasmus. In Valencia they also offer the Valenbisi. These are bikes that are spread around the whole city. You can take them from any point in the city and put them away at another station, really convenient!

## 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:

Visa if applicable: -

Vaccinations if applicable: -

Insurances (extra, if applicable): -

Housing costs per month & type of housing/accommodation: shared apartment with 6 other people, €510,- per month, in the city center.

Groceries: the exact amount differed a lot per week, but it was definitely lower than in the Netherlands.

Public transport: free in 2024

Restaurant/going out for dinner: depends a lot on the restaurant you go to. Going out, on the other hand, is quite expensive. You almost always have to buy a ticket for entry. The drinks at the club are almost always between 10-15 euros.

Daytrips/sight-seeing: with Erasmus organizations daytrips are usually around 20-30 euros.

**Additional remarks regarding expenses?**

No 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?*

In the city of Valencia and the surrounding areas are so many nice things to see. If you go on exchange in Valencia you definitely need to visit the beach. Of course, the city centre also has so many things to offer. There are lots of cafés, places to get coffee, cute shops, etc. When in Valencia you should definitely go to all the different neighbourhoods, such as El Carmen, Rusafa, Blasco Ibañez, and Cabanyal. Other places that I visited were the Montanejos, Buñol, port Saplaya, Chulilla, etc.

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

All the places I visited I found either in a travel guide or online. The travel guide that I mainly used for the city of Valencia itself was 'time to momo - Valencia'. That one I can really recommend.

**Do you have general tips and tricks about leisure time?**

*E.g. recommendations for restaurants, going out?*

For sport I would recommend to get a basic fit membership. They have multiple facilities in the city, which are very similar to the ones in the Netherlands. I also really enjoyed bouldering. There is this place called 'Natural climb', where they offer many different variations of bouldering.

In Valencia there are many options for vegetarian restaurants. Two of my favourites were 'Copenhagen' and 'la Casa Viva'. So definitely check those out.

Lastly, there are a lot of clubs in Valencia. One of the biggest ones is 'Umbracle'. This place is very exotic and big, which makes it worth to check it out at least ones.

## 8. Challenges & best moment abroad

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

The biggest challenge I faced was going to the hospital when I didn't feel all too well. I was unfamiliar with going to the hospital in Spain. I didn't speak the language and I didn't understand how it worked with the insurance. Luckily, a friend of mine helped me with both problems. She told me to call my travel insurance. They eventually helped me figure everything out. She also went with me to the hospital where she conversed with all the hospital staff, seeing as she spoke Spanish. This was a stressful experience, but I learned a lot.

**What is your best memory of your time abroad?**

I went on two big trips with my friend group I got to know there. One trip to Madrid and one to Bilbao. These were both such good experiences. I saw so many beautiful places and ate really good food. Doing that kind of stuff with people you got to know super well in such a short amount of time is really cool.

## 9. Contact details (optional)

<b>Is the reader allowed to contact the writer?</b>	yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Name/e-mail</b>	Marte Koppens; marte.koppens@wur.nl	