



# WUR Goes Abroad

## 1. Student Information

<b>Field of study in Wageningen</b>	Biology
<b>Study period exchange (dd/mm/yyyy)</b>	9-1-2023 until 28-4-2023
<b>Country (exchange)</b>	Canada
<b>City (exchange)</b>	Vancouver
<b>University (exchange)</b>	University of British Columbia
<b>Faculty (exchange)</b>	Faculty of Land and Food systems

## 2. Motivation for exchange

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

I have always wanted to go on exchange to experience a new culture and live in another country.

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

UBC caught my attention because it offered so many courses and with Canada being an English-speaking country you could attend most of these courses. I was also really interested in studying in Vancouver, because I have never lived in a big city before, so I wanted to experience what that was like. Most of all, the nature is what really attracted me to studying here. Walking around campus and having the view of the mountains and the sea is amazing!

## 3. Accessibility to reach destination

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

I think generally, it was cheaper to buy a flight to Vancouver that has a layover in another city than buying a direct flight. When you arrive at Vancouver international airport, you can easily reach the downtown area (the city centre) with the skytrain, which is a metro-line. One ticket costs around 3 CAD, but you can also choose to get an uber or taxi but that is more 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

<b>1</b>	Marine Ecosystems	6	There are 2 lectures given each week and each lecture you will learn about a different marine ecosystem, the different pelagic layers are discussed, as well as different estuary ecosystems. In addition, there are some group projects and a small field excursion to Tower beach, one of the beaches at UBC.	5	This was my favourite course at UBC, the instructors are really great and very knowledgeable. It is a good introduction course if you are interested in marine sciences.
<b>2</b>	Primatology	6	In this course you will learn about all the things regarding primates, such as behaviour, conservation, health, etc. You will also learn about the bone structure and dentition of primates.	3	This course sounded really interesting to me, however I did not really like the structure of this course. The assignments are really repetitive and you have to do a lot of readings. I just wished it would have gone a little more in-depth.
<b>3</b>	Aboriginal Forestry	6	This course starts off with some general information regarding the history and impact of colonisation on aboriginal forestry. Later in the course, different case studies will be discussed, not only about the Indigenous people in Canada but also in other parts of the world.	4	This course was great to get some information about Indigenous people in Canada. Having a background in biology, it was very different from any other course that I had taken before.
<b>4</b>	Aquatic ecosystems and fish in forested watersheds	6	This course is about the different forestry methods in Canada, particularly in British Columbia. This course also has a focus on salmonids, their lifecycle and the different species. There is also one field excursion.	3-4	This was not my favourite course at UBC, but it was cool to hear how forestry is done in BC because of how different it is compared to the Netherlands. When you go out on hikes it is also nice to see the things in nature that you have learned during the lectures.
<b>5</b>					
<b>6</b>					

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

Unlike in Wageningen, a lot of lectures were mandatory, and they count towards your participation grade, although the participation grade only has a small share of the final grade. One other big difference is that there are much more small assignments that you have to do throughout the course. This makes the workload a bit higher compared to Wageningen, but generally these assignments are relatively easy to do. For all courses I had mid-terms as well as final exams. The mid-term season was a bit stressful because you do not have a study week, the exams are just scheduled throughout the classes. For finals, the classes end the week before the exams, so it is more like in Wageningen. However, because of all the assignments you have to do throughout the term, the exams only count for 25-30% of the final grade.

**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 very approachable, you can contact them before or after the lectures or you can visit them during contact hours. My classes were pretty big (around 100 students) but the size of the class depends on the courses you take. Most students in my classes were full-time students, and not exchange students. Because you have less contact hours than at WUR, it might be a bit harder to really get to know the other students but generally everyone was very friendly. I guess it is also up to you how much you engage with other students.

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

This university pretty much has everything. Any sport you can think of you can do it at UBC. It has more than 300 clubs, not only sport clubs but also social clubs, music clubs, etc. If you stay on campus, your student housing will also most likely organise some social events. The clubs are also a great way to meet other people.

## **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 was lucky to have been offered a room on campus. Before coming to UBC you can apply for housing on campus and you have to fill out a survey with your preferred room choices. Generally, when exchange students get a room on campus, they are either housed at Fairview Crescent or Walter Gage. I lived at Fairview Crescent with three other housemates, the houses are really nice but a bit old. In Walter Gage you live with 6 housemates in total, and it is closer to the centre of campus than Fairview Crescent, but the rooms and kitchen are a bit smaller. If you do not get housing on campus I would look for housing in Kitsilano or West Point Grey, which are other neighbourhoods that are close to UBC. There are Facebook groups where they post about housing offers.

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

Canada is still a western country, so there is not really much of a cultural difference to Europe. The stereotype of Canadians being friendly people is definitely true, they will gladly help you with anything. People in Vancouver are also very outdoorsy.

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

Housing in Vancouver is very expensive, cheap rooms range from 700-800 CAD, but it is very normal to rent a room for 1200-1500 CAD a month.

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

In Vancouver you can get around using translink, the public transportation. When you are accepted at UBC you will also have to buy a mandatory u-pass membership, with that you can use the public transport as much as you want (sort of like an OV-chipkaart). Except for the skytrain, most public transport in Vancouver consists of busses. If you want to travel outside of Vancouver, I would recommend getting an evo-membership. Evo is a carshare-company, they have cars all around Vancouver and you can easily use them for a couple of hours or a day. It is a really great option if you want to hike somewhere.

## 6. Free time

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

There are so many places to go to. At UBC you definitely have to visit the beaches on campus, wreck beach or tower beach. Because I went to Vancouver during the winter term, a lot of hikes were not open due to the snow. But the sea to summit hike close to Squamish was one of my favourite ones! During the exchange you should definitely go to Vancouver Island and maybe also Seattle because they are relatively close.

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

One famous hike that you can do in Vancouver is the Grouse grind. However during the winter term it was closed for the season. Alternatively, you can do the BCMC trail which is also located at Grouse mountain. It is a trail that is almost identical to the Grouse grind but it is open during the wintertime. It was a really nice hike, although very slippery because the trail was so icy. I would recommend using microspikes for the hike, although we managed to go up the mountain without them. You can go down the mountain with the gondola. It costs around 20 CAD and you have a really nice view from the mountain.

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

Definitely go to Wreck beach to watch the sunset after a day of classes. It is so nice to go down there! On campus there are also some clubs that offer free dinner or lunch. Every Monday and Wednesday there is a community dinner from the Agora café at the Macmillan building. And every Friday there is free lunch at Sprouts café, but go early because the lines get super long!

## 7.Challenges & best moment abroad

### What was a challenge you have experienced?

I think in the beginning just moving to a new country and adapting to a different culture is a bit challenging. Also, the term at UBC is super short, it is just 4 months. So, it feels like you have just settled in and then the term is done already.

### What was your best memory abroad?

This is a hard question. I don't think I have a single best memory, I just loved to experience the student life at UBC, going to different sports games with my friends, going on hikes and just exploring the city.

## 8. Contact details (optional)

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