



# WUR Goes Abroad

## 1. Student information

<b>Study programme WU</b>	BSc Economie & Beleid
<b>Exchange semester (dd/mm/yyyy)</b>	12/02/2024 until 03/07/2024
<b>Exchange destination: University</b>	Bologna (Campus Bologna)
<b>Faculty</b>	Economics
<b>Country</b>	Italy
<b>City</b>	Bologna

## 2. Motivation for exchange

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

I made this decision so that I could experience the life of a student elsewhere and to meet new people from all over the world since this latter is very minimal in Wageningen in my experience.

### b. What is the reason you chose for this country?

I'm half Italian myself and always wanted to live there and experience the daily life of Italians instead of only experiencing the holiday-life. Besides this, the weather and food are very positive characteristics of Italy too which highly affected my decision.

### c. What is the reason you chose for this university?

The University of Bologna is very famous since it's the oldest – still functioning – university in the world. Besides that, the city is very beautiful and in a very useful geographical position to travel and explore the rest of Italy.

## 3. Accessibility to reach destination

### a. Do you have any advice about reaching your exchange destination?

The easiest way is to fly from Eindhoven or Amsterdam to the airport of Bologna. Especially from Eindhoven the flights are very cheap if you book in advance. Flixbus and train are options too, but direct ones do not exist. So, a layover is needed and time-wise it is likely to take you more than 24 hours. Also, the train or Flixbus are way more expensive than the flight. Flights can be found from €15, Flixbus from €60 and trains from €100. The train and bus arrive at the central station, 10 minutes walking from the centre. The airport provides a monorail to the central station which takes 8 minutes and costs €12 which is quite expensive.

## 4. University and studying

### a. 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	R for Economists	6	Learning the basics of the programming language 'R'.	3,5	Very interesting, but way too easy considering it's a MSc-course.
2	Sustainable Finance	6	Applying finance on climate change. Some climate-related knowledge is already provided by Wageningen, but the application of the financial part is completely new and very interesting. Interesting topics that have been discussed: Climate Risk Stress Testing (CRST), ESG-scores, Transition/Physical climate risk.	4	Could have been the only course that was provided by the WUR from the courses I took. Very good level and one of the only courses referring to scientific literature.
3	SOCIAL NORMS, CULTURE AND ECONOMIC DECISION-MAKING	6	Studying economic game-theories on a micro-level. Gives insights on economic research methods.	3,5	Good level, but no exam provided. Only two papers and one presentation.
4	CRIMINOLOGIA	7	Insights on the basics of fundamental criminological theories.	4,5	It is in Italian, however the oral exam can be taken in English.
5	SISTEMI DI PIANIFICAZIONE E CONTROLLO	5	Cost accounting with many guest lectures from big companies such as KPMG.	3,5	Course is in Italian and written exam as well.

### b. I had sufficient possibilities to select suitable courses that were taught in English (Yes, No - Explain):

Yes, a lot of courses can be chosen. However, many interesting courses are from MSc's and Bologna University doesn't want economics student to chose these (unknown reason). During my exchange I chose a BSc-course which was way too difficult and with permission of the professor of my substitutive MSc-course I could follow it. So, in case they force you to choose only BSc-courses, still try to follow some MSc-courses if they are more interesting to you and send the professor of that course an email to ask for permission to follow the course. The majority of the courses in the economics field are taught in English.

**c. I had sufficient possibilities to select suitable courses in my field of interest (Yes, No - Explain):**

Yes, many courses are provided by the University. It was not hard finding interesting course, but the only hard thing was to find 5 courses which did not overlap in the time-planning. The class schedules were provided only 1 month before in my case, so until the very last moment I was not sure what to do.

**d. I am satisfied with the level of the courses that I followed (Yes, No - Explain):**

Yes, the level of the courses were fine, similar to the WUR. However, the assessment methods were quite poor. One course did not even require an exam and just attending the classes was almost enough to pass the course.

**e. I am satisfied, in the end, with the selection of courses I followed (Yes, No - Explain):**

Yes, the courses were very interesting in general and I learned a lot of new stuff since I deliberately chose courses that are deviating content-wise from the ones in Wageningen.

**f. What is it like to study there?**

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

The economics-courses all required a paper in combination with a paper. The academic level was fine in the English classes. Many referrals to scientific literature and research. However, the Italian classes were not scientific at all and only focused on studying from a book. The examination was fine and very high grades were most of the time provided by the professors. The workload was similar to Wageningen, especially the papers had to be written very similar as in Wageningen. Lesson materials were fine, many papers were provided and all the PowerPoints were easy to find on their equivalent of Brightspace.

**g. What is the culture of the university?**

*E.g. How approachable are the lecturers, engagement with local students? What are the differences with WU?*

The lecturers are very approachable - like in Wageningen - as long as the courses are for groups of max. 40 people. At one course with 200 people was very hard to approach the lecturer. In my English classes the engagement with local students was very minimal, most of the Erasmus students engage with each other during courses since everything is new for them and the local students might study there already 4 years and know each other a long time. I think this is very similar to WU.

**h. What does the university offer students additionally?**

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

There is one specific building where the canteen of the university is with very cheap and healthy meals (€3 for a plate of pasta). Some antique libraries are reserved for UniBo students which is very nice since it won't get very crowded with non-students.

## **5. Housing-traveling-living**

**a. What are the possibilities for housing?**

*E.g. Availability to sign up for a room on campus, private rooms, rent rates?*

I don't think the University provides anything. Some reliable platforms for housing are 'Stanza Semplice' and 'ER.GO'. Rent rates vary a lot. It starts from €400 up to €1800. The majority of the people pay around €800.

**b. What is the culture like?**

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

Eating out is way more normal in Italy since it's also cheaper. The biggest difference is the organization of society. In the Netherlands everything is very clear and structured and in Italy definitely not. There are very often bus and train strikes, information on all kinds of stuff is provided very poorly and obeying the rules is done way less in Italy.

**c. Could you give some information about public transport infrastructure?**

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

Personally I used a monthly public transport pass which is only valid inside Bologna (mainly bus and some short trains). This was €27 a month for students which is very convenient since one bus ride costs €1,50. Watch out since the pass is only valid for the calendar-month and not for 30 days after activating. Depending on where you will live, it can be very easy to walk to the university. However, if you live on the left side of the city, or very far outside on another direction, then a bus should be taken or a bike can be purchased. However, also watch out with bikes since they get stolen very frequently in Bologna so buy a very good lock. The last option is to use shared bikes, named RideMovi. I personally did not do this since it were electric bikes which are not very efficient in a big city with many traffic lights and bad infrastructure for bikes.

## 6. Expenses

**a. Can you give an indication of your expenses for/during your exchange?**

Category	Expenses
Travelling there	€500
Visa - if applicable	/
Vaccinations - if applicable	/
Insurances (extra) - if applicable	/
Daytrips/sight-seeing	+/- €500 (4 trips)
Housing costs per month & type of housing/accommodation	€600 & Private apartment
Grocery costs per month	€120
Public transport costs per month	€27
Restaurant/going out for dinner costs per month	€90

**b. The price levels were in general [higher; lower; equal] in comparison to in the Netherlands:**

Definitely lower, especially restaurants, mobile data and breakfast outside the door.

**c. Additional remarks regarding expenses?**

Stop your Dutch public transport subscription. In stead of that the Dutch government gives you a monthly compensation of approx. €120 per month. Also, request a FrecciaYoung card at Trenitalia (The Dutch NS), with this you can get big discounts on your train journeys.

## 7. Free time

### a. What are must-sees in the area?

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

The city centre of Bologna itself is very beautiful and worth visiting very often. There are very nice sports teams to visit as well (football, basketball). Nearby destinations worth visiting are Florence, Ravenna/Rimini, Imola (in case of the GP), Milano (1 hour by train) Venice and Verona. For trips that take more time to travel, Puglia, Sardegna, Sicily, Cinque Terre and Rome/Naples are very nice. Trains and Buses in Italy work out very well. If you book those in advance you can travel very cheap. Buses from Bologna to Milan/Venice start from €0,60 one-way if booked in time. Regional trains don't change in price, so a trip to a city within 2 hours from Bologna can be planned last-minute.

### b. What does not appear in a travel guide, but is definitely worth seeing/doing?

Eat at Osteria Broccaindosso and visit a match of Fortitudo. All of the other places worth to visit all appear in the travel guides.

## 8. Challenges & best moment abroad

### a. Any challenges? How did you deal with them?

Being able to reach my contact person was very challenging, so the only option was to have a lot of patience. One week before my exchange I have been calling for 5 hours straight and no one could help me. In the end it was all fine, but some patience is required.

### b. Best memory?

Going on a spontaneous trip to Cinque Terre by car and seeing beautiful places there. In Bologna it was going out very often by night and eat pizza for a few euros.

## 9. Contact details

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