



# WUR Goes Abroad

## 1. Student information

<b>Study programme WU</b>	Bachelor Environmental Sciences
<b>Exchange semester (dd/mm/yyyy)</b>	25/02/2024 until 19/06/2024
<b>Exchange destination: University</b>	Universidad Autónoma de Madrid
<b>Faculty</b>	Sciences
<b>Country</b>	Spain
<b>City</b>	Madrid

## 2. Motivation for exchange

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

I wanted to experience a different cultural background from The Netherlands and Panama.

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

It is a Spanish-speaking country, and I am a native speaker, so I missed the home feeling.

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

Compared to the other universities in Spain, this one offered courses that I was more interested in.

## 3. Accessibility to reach destination

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

In my opinion, lean on what you feel is the best decision for you at the moment and what you want to gain from it. For me, I missed home, and I went to a country that made me feel like home.

## 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	Geographical Information Systems (Spanish)	6	History of GIS and lots of	4	One of the professors is not a professional and

			computer practicals		doesn't help you. I got very annoyed by that.
<b>2</b>	Ecology and Management of Resources (Spanish)	6	Resources, real-life problems, agriculture, forestry, economic wise. Dynamic classes.	5	I really liked this one. Especially the assignments and fieldwork.
<b>3</b>	Land Planning and the Environment (Spanish)	6	Regional plans, regulations and laws from Madrid. Very specific.	2	Nice field trip. The group project was a mess because of dragging Spanish students to meet deadlines.
<b>4</b>	Biotechnology: Environmental Analysis and Bioremediation II (Spanish/English)	6	Bioremediation technologies, Bioindicators and Index to measure air and water quality.	5	I loved this course. Lots of practical/fieldwork. Very interesting classes. The professors were very nice. Not for everyone because we were always 7/22 in class.
<b>5</b>	Environmental Photochemistry	6	Basic concepts, air quality, marine photochemistry, UV radiation	2	The professor wasn't good. Some group projects and computer practicals.
<b>6</b>					

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

No, the course selection is very limited, therefore I chose all my courses in Spanish since I am a native speaker.

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

Yes.

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

Yes and no, because the course material is very interesting, but it depends on the professor. Some were good ones, and some very bad ones.

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

Yes.

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

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

I believe that depends on the courses you choose, and how many credits you apply for. I had Spanish friends who took less than 30 credits per semester to go with ease, so they had less workload for sure. I had many assignments but manageable, and the exams were easier than WUR, but you have to memorize everything word by word to get all the points. Apparently, they value length and overexplaining rather than precise answers. I took some 2 and 3-year courses, so the level was lower for sure but my 4<sup>th</sup> year one was similar to WUR.

**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 easy to approach, especially if you mention that you are an Erasmus student. Regarding local students, most of them don't speak very good English but are nice. It does feel like High School. However, you managed to find the right people.

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

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

There is a cafeteria in every building that provides vegetarian options. The prices are very cheap. Regarding sports facilities, there is a gym, tennis and padel courts. I didn't use them because are quite pricey.

## 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 got a room in a shared flat (6 in total) through Idealista.com, which is a great website. Around the centre near Nuevos Ministerios Station, so I could take the Renfe (20 min) to get to uni. You can get a room closer to the centre in Sol Station and take the Renfe too. Prices are around 350-800, depending on the neighbourhood.

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

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

Well, dinner time is at 9/10 pm, but that wasn't different to me. There is siesta time at around 3-4 pm, so some shops close during that time. Restaurants are cheap, not in Salamanca (a rich neighbourhood). I didn't encounter many differences (I'm from Panama).

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

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

You can get an Abono Card for 8 euros/month and travel around Madrid. I also went to Toledo with the card. Metro is very efficient and reliable. The buses can come a few minutes before or get delayed but there are QR codes in every bus stop to check the bus. The Renfe, which is the one I used to get to uni every day, often comes in time but sometimes can be very delayed. Also, around the city is so easy to walk.

## 6. Expenses

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

Category	Expenses
Travelling there	80 by bus and 200 by plane
Visa - if applicable	
Vaccinations - if applicable	
Insurances (extra) - if applicable	
Daytrips/sight-seeing	8 euro bus to Segovia or 30 euro train/bus to Barcelona/Valencia in low season
Housing costs per month & type of housing/accommodation	580, in a shared flat
Grocery costs per month	120
Public transport costs per month	8
Restaurant/going out for dinner costs per month	30-50

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

I would say equal because the rent was higher, but the food was lower. BUT I could have had a cheaper flat, for sure.

### c. Additional remarks regarding expenses?

## 7. Free time

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

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

You can go to El Prado Museum and Reina Sofia Museum for free since we are students. There are small exhibitions now and then for 5-11 euros. You can travel with the abono card to Toledo by bus and 8 euro total to Segovia by bus. With the Renfe, you can get to Sierra de Guadarrama for hiking trails.

In the centre, you can go to the Retiro Park, Casa de Campo, thrifting in Malasaña and the market on Sundays "El Rastro" at La Latina Station.

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

Don't spend all your time around Gran Vía/Sol/Plaza Mayor, Madrid has many nicer neighbourhoods to walk and visit than the main ones.

## 8. Challenges & best moment abroad

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

No.

**b. Best memory?**

Maybe eat a 2-euro pizza slice with my friends at Plaza dos de Mayo, the best place to hang out.

**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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