



WUR Goes Abroad

1. Student information

Study programme WU	Master Aquaculture and Marine Resource Management
Exchange semester (dd/mm/yyyy)	22/01/2024 until 02/06/2024
Exchange destination: University	University of Plymouth
Faculty	Science and Engineering
Country	United Kingdom
City	Plymouth

2. Motivation for exchange

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

I wanted to experience being somewhere completely new, where I had to settle again, get to know the habits of a different university and country. I also wanted to challenge myself in communicating fully in English, and make connections with local and international students. I think that having a full reset of everything that I have been used to studying at Wageningen, is very good for my personal development.

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

I chose the university rather than the country, as they are well known in specializing in marine research. Later I realized that in the uk, especially Scotland, there is a lot of aquaculture companies, and that it might have been a solid choice for networking. However, this has not really been the main goal of my exchange, and I do not feel like I have gained connections in that specific field.

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

The university is worldly well known for their marine departments, doing a lot of research in the area. They have a lot of courses and programmes about different aspects of the marine environment, and I felt like that is the best location for expanding my knowledge.

3. Accessibility to reach destination

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

The Eurostar train is very easy and relaxing way to get to London, however the way to Plymouth itself is long and tough. I think the trains in the UK are terrible and expensive, and I would advise someone visiting Plymouth to take the coach, I have had especially good experiences with National Express.

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	Global change biology	10	All ways in which anthropogenic activities have changed ecological interactions between two or more species.	3	This is a quite depressing course, as it is one big summation about species that are dying out/ have become extinct by human activities. It is majorly focussed on climatic causes. Only lectures. i liked the part about historic climate especially.
2	Ecology and conservation of marine vertebrates	10	Largely about researching abundances of whales, porpoises, dolphins etc. several methods, using sound, planes and boats. Also about history on whaling, population habits, and effect of protected areas.	3	I did not enjoy the methods part about the course, the lectures about spotting marks on fins, sailing/flying in lines to spot animals, ways to calculate abundance levels. I was intrigued, but depressed, by the history of whaling. The fact that there are only lectures made it very passive way of learning.
3	Biological Oceanography	10	About the ecology of the deep sea, and the microbial findings in the ocean, deep sea as well as top surface layers.	5	I loved the microbial part, and some examples on how they found out their mechanism and role in the whole world environment. The deep sea lectures were cool as well, where there was a summation of ecological findings.

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

c. I had sufficient possibilities to select suitable courses in my field of interest (Yes, No - Explain): Yes, they had plenty of marine related options.

d. I am satisfied with the level of the courses that I followed (Yes, No - Explain): they made it seem like the level was really hard, and that it was impossible to achieve a high grade. I really do not agree with the way of examining and teaching (essay exams where you were expected to quote by heart papers you have read outside of the lecture content), but in the end I did pass the courses not with more effort than I would have put in courses at Wageningen.

e. I am satisfied, in the end, with the selection of courses I followed (Yes, No - Explain): if I could change a course, it would be global change biology. However, because of scheduling that was not possible. I still am glad I gained the knowledge from that course, however that really changes my world-perspective in the first months, and my mood as well.

f. What is it like to study there?

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

There are very little contact hours, only lectures on few days in the week. I was expected to just 'read papers' without any guide to what papers I should read, how well I should study them and how many I should read. I think it is very important to push students to explore certain research areas on their own, but this is not the right way.

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 were really not approachable, when asking questions about the course and way of teaching at the university, they were vague and did not want to support in any extra way for me as an exchange student. They did not even provided any feedback on coursework (that counted on its own for 5 ects). There is possibilities for engagement with local students, which is quite open to access.

h. What does the university offer students additionally?

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

The housing offered very expensive laundry facilities. The university provided a very very small gym, which was overcrowded, but there were some classes as well. For joining a specific sport you had to join an club. There were multiple lunchrooms and coffee places on campus

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?

Although the housing was easily provided for me, it was a really depressing place. It really looked like a jail cell, restricted windows, big brick walls, small kitchen with no

daylight. There were homeless people screaming down the flat every other night. It was really expensive, about 570 euros per month for 12m2.

b. What is the culture like?

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

I have not had much experiences with local cuisines, manners etc. but those I had were not difficult to adapt to.

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

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

The university village was 5 min walk from campus, as was the city centre. Busses are n2pound where ever you go, if you take one bus. Biking is impossible and dangerous.

6. Expenses

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

Category	Expenses
Travelling there	200 eur0s, 200 back
Visa - if applicable	none
Vaccinations - if applicable	none
Insurances (extra) - if applicable	none
Daytrips/sight-seeing	20-50
Housing costs per month & type of housing/accommodation	570
Grocery costs per month	200
Public transport costs per month	20
Restaurant/going out for dinner costs per month	200

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

higher, dinners and groceries where higher especially in the city.

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?

The beaches of the south coast are lovely, there are some very small towns that look Mediterranean, in spring summer tho. Dartmoor national park is beautiful, however hard to reach via public transport. The southwest coastal path is beautiful to walk.

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

Getting pizza at woodfired stove pizzas.

8. Challenges & best moment abroad

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

It is hard especially in winter, to connect with people. I found that a lot of people, brits, have very much settled in their friend group and are less

open to temporary contacts. Which I understand. The weather, and robbins halls, are also very depressing. Go In summer and everything is better.

b. Best memory?

9. Contact details

Is the reader allowed to contact the writer?	yes <input type="checkbox"/>	no <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Name & email address (if yes)		