



WUR Goes Abroad

1. Student information

Study programme WU	BSc Environmental Sciences
Exchange semester (dd/mm/yyyy)	5/2/2024 until 24/6/2024
Exchange destination: University	CZU
Faculty	Environmental Sciences
Country	Czech Republic
City	Prague

2. Motivation for exchange

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

I chose to go on a study exchange for two distinct reasons. First, I wanted to get out of the "Wageningen bubble" before choosing the step following my bachelor, whether it would be a master at WUR, or an internship, or a master somewhere else. I hoped to find projects and meet people that would inspire that next step. Secondly, I wanted to visit a country and a culture that I am not familiar with.

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

I knew nothing about Czech Republic (not even that Czechs drink insane amounts of beer) and I realized that I would probably never go to a Eastern European country on my own, so I better take the opportunity.

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

I chose the university because of its location: Prague, the capital of Czech Republic. I wanted to experience the student life in a big city.

3. Accessibility to reach destination

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

There are multiple ways to get to Prague: I recommend Flixbus because it's sustainable and you can bring A LOT of luggage for cheap.

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	<i>Fundamentals of Political Science</i>	5	Basic concepts of political sciences and in depth study of electoral systems.	4	
2	<i>Landscape Architecture</i>	6	Classes were in function of a semester-long project on assessing and redesigning a part of the university's campus.	4	
3	<i>Land Reclamation Workshop</i>	3	Excursion and assignment on reclaimed mining sites in Czech Republic.	5	
4	<i>Spatial Planning</i>	5	Classes were in function of a semester-long project on assessing and redesigning a sub-urban town on the outskirts of Prague.	4	
5	<i>Environmental Contamination and Remediation Technology</i>	5	Types of contaminants and types of remediation technologies. Excursions to former mining site and nuclear research facility.	3	
6	<i>Waste management</i>	6	Types of waste, types of waste processing facilities, waste processing technologies, EU waste directives.	3	

b. I had sufficient possibilities to select suitable courses that were taught in English (Yes, No - Explain): Yes, there are many courses taught in English because of English Bachelor and Masters programmes.

c. I had sufficient possibilities to select suitable courses in my field of interest (Yes, No - Explain): Yes, the Environmental Sciences faculty offers English taught programmes.

d. I am satisfied with the level of the courses that I followed (Yes, No - Explain): No, the content was often superficial and classes would often be cancelled without notice in advance.

e. I am satisfied, in the end, with the selection of courses I followed (Yes, No - Explain): Yes, the selection allowed me to investigate my interests.

f. What is it like to study there?

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

The academic experience at CZU depends on the courses you take. I took some courses whose passing depended on group projects alone, some courses who requested passing a final examination and some courses asked to submit assignments. All courses with a group project involved staying on campus after class with my classmates. Assignments were often on a pass or fail basis, and professors were not specific in their requests (nor strict in their judgement). The lectures I attended were given in good English and the content was light and manageable.

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?

In my experience lecturers were friendly and open to questions, just like at WU. It was easy also to interact with fellow students, both in and out of the class. I would say that the main difference with WU is that lecturers don't take the course schedule seriously: they could cancel a lecture the evening before or they could wait until the end of the semester to decide the examination date.

h. What does the university offer students additionally?

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

The sport facilities offered by the university and mostly at a cost (a few euros per use) and do not have convenient opening times. For example, the swimming pool is open to students only very early and on certain days. The Menza is a building on campus that offers good food options, because they are cheap, big portions and there are meat alternatives. I am not sure about vegan options and I cannot advertise the tastiness of all dishes...

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?

There are dormitories on campus: they allow to bond with other international students and they are convenient if you have early classes. Although I have heard that the kitchen situation is not the best and they had issues with bugs. Personally, I preferred a cozier living situation (less housemates than a dorm) and with a better location (the campus is 40min away from the center of Prague). I found a group of girls who wanted to share an apartment on Facebook (if you do so, be aware of scammers!) and we found one on a rental service for Erasmus students. Consider that it is normal for landlords to ask for a deposit in cash at the beginning of your stay.

b. What is the culture like?

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

Czech cuisine is mostly meat based, besides a few soups and fried cheese. I recommend to throw yourself in the multicultural food offers of the city: from Palestinian, to Nepalese, to Georgian restaurants and bakeries. There is a huge cultural offer: from museums, to open air events, to music performances. The price is my opinion accessible (less than 10EUR to enter in a museum), and it gets even better when the city funds "free" days for visiting museums, churches and gardens. Czech people can be friendly, when they see an effort from the foreigner: learn a few words and sentences if you want to have nice interactions with locals.

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

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

Public transport is one of the things I will miss the most about Prague: the student fares are extremely cheap (15EUR for three months of any metro and bus in the metropolitan area). Taxi is expensive, but Bolt represent a cheap alternative (it's a sort of cheap Uber).

I lived in the center and to get to university I used a tram until the end of its run and then took the 107 bus. It took me 40 minutes.

6. Expenses

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

Category	Expenses
Travelling there	60
Visa - if applicable	-
Vaccinations - if applicable	-
Insurances (extra) - if applicable	-
Daytrips/sight-seeing	200
Housing costs per month & type of housing/accommodation	520
Grocery costs per month	150
Public transport costs per month	5
Restaurant/going out for dinner costs per month	100

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

c. Additional remarks regarding expenses?

As a European student, you can get a housing allowance of about 20EUR/month (I know it's not a lot, but why leave it there?). It is also possible to find a part time job for English speakers.

7. Free time

a. What are must-sees in the area?

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

I strongly recommend to visit some little characteristic Czech towns, such as Cesky Krumlov and Karlovy Vary. I also recommend to hike around, because there are many natural parks. Although for all these activities I think it's better to go in the warmer months (green trees really change the views).

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

The castle Vysehrad is in the south of Prague and offers a unique view on the river and the old town.

8. Challenges & best moment abroad

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

I struggled with peer pressure as Prague is known to be a party-city and the Erasmus students who go there are known to be good at it. I am not a person with infinite energy nor social battery, so it was hard for me to say no to events (because there is always something going on). It was a chance for me to learn how to deal with that pressure and respect how I feel.

b. Best memory?

Finding a good pizzeria in Prague with my friends (shout out to San Carlo!).

9. Contact details

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