



# WUR Goes Abroad

## 1. Student Information

<b>Field of study in Wageningen</b>	Bachelor Nutrition and Health (BVG)
<b>Study period exchange (dd/mm/yyyy)</b>	01/09/2022 until 24/01/2023
<b>Country (exchange)</b>	Spain (ES)
<b>City (exchange)</b>	Valencia (VLC)
<b>University (exchange)</b>	Universidad Católica de Valencia (UCV)
<b>Faculty (exchange)</b>	Dentistry

## 2. Motivation for exchange

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

I wanted to have the experience of living abroad. I wanted to know what it is like to study in a different country. I also thought I would regret it when I didn't go.

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

I choose to go to Spain because of the nice weather, lovely beaches and beautiful nature. Furthermore the people seemed very friendly to me. In the end I really enjoyed the sun during summer, but my apartment did not have any heating abilities. Therefore in winter it was still cold. The people were indeed friendly although they did not always (try to) speak English. I have been told 'you really must learn Spanish!' lots of times, haha.

## 3. Accessibility to reach destination

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

I went to Valencia by plane. When you book on time (around two months before departure) plane tickets are only around €50,-. I think this is a cheap and easy way to go to Valencia. Of course it is not very friendly for the environment. A friend of mine came by car but it is a very long drive. As a tip I would recommend you to think about the Christmas vacation in time. If you would like to go back home you can already book a ticket which could save you some money.

## 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
1	Anthropology	6	Different philosophical views	4	I think this course is very nice especially when you are on an exchange. It makes you think about what is really important in life, what makes us happy, what approach should you have towards difficult situations? Etc.
2	Embryology and general anatomy	6	How bodily structures are built, their names and their embryonic origin	4	I think it is so weird I have learned about physiology in my bachelors but never about anatomy. I learned about the names of different body parts and how bodily structures contribute to their function. With this course it felt like everything fell into place. Also the development from zygote to foetus was an interesting subject.

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

During the whole semester you will have the same time schedule each week. You will follow all the courses for the semester at once. Every week you will have two lectures per course. All courses will finish the week before the Christmas break. After the Christmas break there are two exam-weeks. Being present counted as a part of my grade (if you don't show up 10% can be subtracted from your grade. However, if you do show up you do **not** get 10% on top of your grade).

For the course '*Embryology and general anatomy*' I also had to follow some practicals where a lot of anatomical names were given. At the end of each practical we needed to recall the names on a written exam. I thought this was quite hard since we didn't have a lot of time to practice the names. I had five practicas that together counted for 20% of my grade.

The professors were very friendly and willing to help. Since classes are very small (around 20-30 students) professors know you by name and try to be very personal. In the last lecture of each course I was told the important topics for the exam which really helped me during studying. However, there was no practise exam, which made me doubt about the level of detail I needed to know. It turned out that they didn't ask a lot about details but more about the main concepts.

The level of English really varied per professor. Some spoke very good English while others I really couldn't understand. My advice is to follow the courses in Spanish if you can speak Spanish and otherwise don't give up too soon. When you talk to classmates you'll see that you are all in this together. Don't panic and just try your best.

**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 Spanish students preferred to stay with the other Spanish students. I met some Spanish people within my 'buddy group', which was very nice. You can apply for this when you hand in your learning agreement on the UCV website.

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

You can have a warm meal and drink in the university cafeteria. I think this was around €6. You are allowed to drink beer in university. Since this university is Christian, there are church services offered and prayer sites. However, when I asked classmates, a lot of them seemed to be atheistic. The UCV also offers sports. They have a rugby team, climbing/hiking team, they give surf clinics and other things. I'm not sure if they offer a gym. There were no laundry facilities. There was a library where I was allowed to eat.

## 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 searched on different websites: spotahome.com, uniplaces etc. In the end all websites seemed to be from the same mother-company. I reserved a room online and paid to make this reservation. When I came to Valencia the room turned out to be burned due to a fire a week ago. I was not contacted by the company about this and spent 5 days to find another room, meanwhile I stayed in a hotel. The people from the agency were very stressed and unfriendly. They gave me keys to visit apartments where other people were still living or they sent me into the city to visit a room but gave me the wrong key so I walked an hour for nothing. I recommend you to come to Valencia one week prior to the start of university in case you have a problem with your room. Also, stand your ground! After 5 days complaining I got offered a way better apartment than on day 1.

Another thing about the apartments is that fire alarms are not mandatory and therefore not present most of the time.

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

When there is no bike-lane bikers should go on the road for cars. I was really scared to do this the first time, but after a while I was getting used to it. Also it is not allowed to wear headphones while riding a bike. Another thing is that the police (on the airport) and bouncers (in clubs) are taken way more serious here. they have more prestige and you have to treat them with respect.

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

People tend to think that Spain is less expensive than the Netherlands. Overall this might be true, but since Valencia is very touristic prices are quite similar to the Netherlands (also in the supermarkets). A tip is to use the app: *'too good to go'*

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

Taxis are cheaper than in the Netherlands. 20 minutes in a taxi will cost you around €20.-. A tip is to share a taxi. You can drive together and both pay 10€ for example. Public transportation is quite cheap as well. A bus ticket costs €1.50 and for the metro I paid €4. In Valencia biking is also very popular. I rented my bike via Kleta. I think this is the only company where you can rent your bike for several months. The city also offers Valenbisi, I really recommend you **not** to use this. The bikes are heavy and the racks are sometimes full (you cannot park your bike where you want) or empty (you want to leave but there is no bike). I also recommend you **not** to buy or bring your own bike since there is a lot of theft.

## **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 lots of nice museums and exhibitions in Valencia for example *'Museum de las fallas'* or *'Museo Nacional de Cerámica'*. You could also visit Barcelona or Madrid with the Metro. Something you must see is Montanejos! Another fun activity that is free is to climb the old city gates (there are two). Valencia also has a large park where you can have a picnic or do sports. Valencia also has a lovely beach with lots of volleyball nets.

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

With a friend I went to a candle light concert in a hotel in Valencia which was very nice. There is also an area with lots of stores that sell vintage clothes. Furthermore you can register for lots of fun activities via *'erasmusvalencia.com'*. Here you can also find free tickets for clubs.

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

I really loved the clubs *'Umbracle'* and *'Marina'*. I also recommend to bring some traditional Dutch snacks for friends you are going to make.

## **7.Challenges & best moment abroad**

### **What was a challenge you have experienced?**

I really struggled with using the public transport on my own. I always managed to take the wrong metro or bus even though I checked it several times. Sometimes I really

panicked because of this. I tried to stay calm and asked for help. In the end I always made it back home.

### **What was your best memory abroad?**

I made a lot of good memories abroad but I think the most valuable thing for me was to become less scared to talk to people I don't know yet. I have also learned that if I want to do something I should manage it right away, otherwise I will never do it. And at last, reading about places and looking at pictures is not the same as being there in person. We should be less on our phones and connect more with real people and nature.

## **8. Contact details (optional)**

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