



WUR Goes Abroad

1. Student Information

Field of study in Wageningen	BBC
Study period exchange (dd/mm/yyyy)	05/09/2021 until 05/02/2022
Country (exchange)	Belgium
City (exchange)	Gent
University (exchange)	Universiteit Gent
Faculty (exchange)	Political and Social sciences

2. Motivation for exchange

Why did you choose to go on study exchange? Ever since I was looking at universities, one of the things I was looking for, was the possibility to go abroad. Other countries have always fascinated me, and I wanted to broaden my horizon, and not stay in the Netherlands forever. It is an once in a lifetime opportunity and I think it is also a very important part of growing as a person.

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

I was supposed to go to Milan, in the second semester of 2021. However, due to corona, it got cancelled. But I still really wanted to go on exchange. I decided to postpone my graduation of my bachelor to take some extra courses on exchange. I decided to go to Ghent, because I heard from so many people that it is a great city, plus, with corona in the back of my mind, I thought that if any exchange would go through, it would be an exchange to Belgium, since it is a neighbouring country.

3. Accessibility to reach destination

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

Since Belgium is very close by, it is reachable by car. From my parents house (close to Woerden), it is less than a two hour drive. I would recommend this, since you can also take a lot more stuff with you.

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	History of globalisation	6	This course focused mostly on the influence of slavery and how this affected the current west and the formal colonised countries	3	
2	Cultural media studies	5	This course was about how the definition and how there was looked at popular culture and popular media changed during different times in history. It was quite interesting	4	
3	Consumer behaviour	5	This course teaches the basics of consumer behaviour, it was quite interesting, but for a bbc student, a little too easy.	3	
4	Political ethnography	6	You learn about the ethnographic research methods, focused on political processes visible in non-political spaces (e.g. classroom etc).	3	
5	Media psychology and media sociology	5	This course focuses on (online) media and how this affects people and what kind of techniques are used to influence people online.	4	
6					

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

The lessons take 3 hours, and I had each course once a week. You have all your courses at the same time for the entire semester. Then, after Christmas break, the examination period starts, this takes 4 weeks. The academic level is very doable, it is not more difficult than Wageningen.

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 lecturers are approachable, you can come to them with questions and they will help you. I found it harder to engage with the local students, as they are usually very to themselves. However, if you find the right persons, they will always be in for a little chat. For most of my courses I also had to do group work, but most of the time, you could just subscribe to a group online. Moreover, if you cannot find a group if you have to make them yourselves, the lecturers will help you.

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

There are a lot of places where you can study, a lot of libraries or study places. Most of them have a cafeteria where you can get good food during your break of studying.

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?)

If you want to have room from the university, you have to apply quite early for this and on time, because they are full very quickly. I found my room via facebook, and had a subrent of someone who also went on exchange. I lived on a very good location (3 mins by bike from the city centre)

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

Belgium and the Netherlands are quite similar in a lot of things, there is an Albert Heijn, an Hema, Kruidvat etc. so that is quite nice. However, it also differed in a lot of things that I didn't necessarily expect. For example, the people are a bit harder to approach and it goes all slower there. In the Netherlands, things and life go quite fast, people are fast and a bit louder, it was there all slower.

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

In Wageningen I pay around €355 and there I paid €475, for a smaller room. However I also heard people who had a cheaper room. I think residences are a little more expensive, but the living costs are a bit cheaper. The prices in the albert heijn are a bit lower there. So living is cheaper.

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

I didn't use public transport in Ghent itself, because everything is reachable by bike. I highly recommend using a bike, you can bring your own, but there are also options to rent a bike there, from the 'fiets ambassade' etc. I did some trips to other cities, and then you can easily cycle to the train station and take the train from there. Tickets are not that expensive, and to the usual cities, (Brugge, Antwerpen, Brussel) there goes a direct train.

6. Free time

What are must-sees in the area? (E.g. nearby destinations, how do you prefer to travel, when to plan?)

You need to see the churches and cathedrals, and something that is really nice and cheap with student card, is 'climbing' the Belfort. There is a lift inside and you have a really nice view of Ghent. Other things are the Boekentoren and the castle.

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

I did not really read a travel guide, but just visiting the parks in Ghent and just cycling through it.

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

If you want to go out, Overpoort is the place to be. This is one street with a lot of bars and clubs. There are a lot of restaurants in Ghent, that are not very expensive. Especially in the student area (around Sint-Pietersnieuwstraat) it is not that expensive. A lot of leisure time I just spent hanging with friends and being in the centre, going for a walk or just sitting at the water (Leie).

7.Challenges & best moment abroad

What was a challenge you have experienced?

During the examination period in January (4 weeks), I experienced a lot of stress, because you have a lot of exams in the same period, instead of only two as we are used to in Wageningen, I suddenly had 4 in 8 days. This was quite stressful and I experienced a lot of symptoms of it, which I normally never have.

What was your best memory abroad?

Just the whole experience was so nice. You meet people so easily at the ESN events, and a lot of the people on exchange are very approachable. It is easy to make friends, and it was so nice to be able to dance in the club again. Everything was open in Belgium in the first three months of my exchange. This was so nice and really felt like normal life again.

8. Contact details (optional)

Is the reader allowed to contact the writer?	yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no <input type="checkbox"/>
Name/e-mail	Sigrid van der Mast. Sigrid.vandermast@wur.nl	