



WUR Goes Abroad

1. Student Information

Field of study in Wageningen	International Development Studies
Study period exchange (dd/mm/yyyy)	18/07/2022 until 17/11/2022
Country (exchange)	Australia
City (exchange)	Wollongong
University (exchange)	University of Wollongong
Faculty (exchange)	Humanities and social sciences

2. Motivation for exchange

Why did you choose to go on study exchange?

Learning in different environments can bring new perspectives and perhaps new ways of learning. It is also a great opportunity to gain new friendships and international networks.

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

I always wanted to visit Australia, mostly because of its national parks. I chose to go to Wollongong as it seemed to have a similar vibe to WUR in the sense that it is not a large city, so the atmosphere looked a bit more laid back compared to the other universities in Australia.

3. Accessibility to reach destination

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

The public transport is pretty good in the area, you can be in Sydney within 2.5 hours and under \$10, so I would definitely make the most out of that. Otherwise the university provides free transport from the airport upon arrival. Wollongong also has a convenient free bus loop which you can take to get around the city.

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	Environmental philosophy	7.5	Thinking critically about ethics in the context of climate change issues	4	Lots of group discussions. May get a bit depressing sometimes.
2	Working with Indigenous communities	7.5	Learn how to properly and respectfully work with Indigenous Australians	3	Great that the course was taught by an Indigenous Australian. The content was a little basic.
3	Ocean, development and people	7.5	Introductory course on threats and solutions in marine environments	5	Very enthusiastic professor and lots of guest lectures from the field.
4					
5					
6					

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

Academic level is pretty similar to WUR, but the work load heavily depends on the subjects. The three I took were relatively low. Examination for these courses consisted mostly of practical assignments like essays. Lectures were always on campus with lots of interactive group discussion.

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 culture was very laid back. Lecturers were in my experience very approachable and friendly. I think student-teacher relations were a bit more casual compared to WUR.

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

The university has social clubs for literally everything, even bubble tea. Also a lot of important mental health support systems compared to WUR, like a 24/7 phone line and free counselling, which I thought was great.

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?)

It is easiest to rent a room on campus, the university will send instructions for this and it is all pretty straightforward. Getting a room outside of campus is mostly done by locals and it is quite hard to get as an exchange student. Also, price-wise, it is not much cheaper, so I would say it is not worth the trouble.

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

People are generally very friendly and sociable. Culture and cuisine I think is a mix between the UK and the US. Not sure how to explain it exactly, but overall a pleasant environment.

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

Rent is very expensive, expect to pay 2-3 times as much compared to Dutch student housing. Food is also a little more expensive than in NL.

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 very cheap, but does not reach as much places as in NL. Wollongong also has a free bus loop which can take you around the city. Taxis are pretty expensive, but sharing an Uber was also a frequent way of going about the city.

6. Free time

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

Being close to Sydney brings a lot of perks as you can travel all across Australia if you want. Otherwise, New South Wales has a lot to offer as well in terms of national parks and beaches. I would recommend hiring a car though.

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

Jervis Bay was a highlight for me. It is a few hours South from Wollongong and relatively less known compared to other spots in Australia. But go there in the right season and you can catch the humpback whales migrating, visit the resident fur seal colonies or enjoy the whitest sand beach on earth.

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

Try to mingle with local students. They are usually very open and have a car to go around. You can also go out in Sydney and travel back in the morning, or go over the weekend. There is a small clubbing scene in Wollongong, but I found it to get old boring quite fast.

7.Challenges & best moment abroad

What was a challenge you have experienced?

Not being able to get around on my bicycle. Having to rely on public transport can be a little annoying.

What was your best memory abroad?

My best memories were probably the nights I spent with my housemates at home. We had quite a lot due to bad weather, but we made it work.

8. Contact details (optional)

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