



# WUR Goes Abroad

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## 1. Student Information

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<b>Study programme WUR</b>	BES
<b>Exchange semester (dd/mm/yyyy)</b>	21-08-23 until 13-12-23
<b>Exchange destination: University</b>	Agricultural University of Iceland
<b>Faculty</b>	Environmental & Forest Sciences
<b>Country</b>	Iceland
<b>City</b>	Hvanneyri

## 2. Motivation for exchange

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

To improve my language skills and meet new people from all over the world.  
Furthermore, to gain experiences of living in another country for a while.

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

The nature and environment of the country I was always curious about and I felt like this was an amazing opportunity to live for such a long time in such a beautiful country and that 4 months were perfect.

## 3. Accessibility to reach destination

### **Do you have any tips to reach your exchange destination?**

This was covered by the university itself, there was a pick-up bus from the airport for all exchange students.

## 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	Ecological Restoration and Global Environmental Challenges	4	Field trips and	3	Many deadlines for papers and presentations a week. High work load.
2	Ecosystem Ecology and Sustainable Management	6	Lectures on many components that contribute to an ecosystem together with field trips and experiments.	5	-
3	Forest ecology in a treeless country	2	Field trips to planted forests and ongoing reforestation projects.	5	-
4	Grazing ecology and management	4	Lectures on grazing pressure mainly by sheep on the environment in general and of Iceland.	5	-
5	IN&E issues at the Arctic edge – Environmental Issue in Iceland	5	Lectures on environmental issues that could arise or are taking place in Iceland as a consequence of human actions or natural disasters like volcano eruptions and earthquakes etc.	4	Lectures were sometimes online and some repetition with the Nature of Iceland course.
6	IN&E issues at the Arctic edge – Nature of Iceland	5	Lectures on the different environmental states in Iceland: volcanoes, geothermal activity, glaciers, flora and fauna etc.	4	Lectures were sometimes online.

### What is it like to study there?

The academic level is much lower than at the WUR. The tests are often online and take at home and I had to write more papers than I did at the WUR, but because of this also had less final exams. Only at two courses I experiences a bigger work load, but the rest was very doable and I had much free time left to explore Iceland. In the beginning of the semester, I choose courses with many field trips which was very nice.

**What is the culture of the university?**

The lecturers were very approachable and were always happy to help if you had questions. The local students did not follow the same courses I chose, as there were also many courses in Icelandic. Because of this, the exchange students could unfortunately not really engage much with the local students. The university itself is very much smaller compared to the WUR and there were only approx. 200 students there.

**What does the university offer students additionally?**

There is lunch every day at the canteen in the university but this cost 13 euros a meal. Almost every apartment had a laundry machine, but many were broken. There are not really student associations, but there is a gym, a volleyball field and nice hiking trails around the university.

## 5. Housing-travelling-living

**What are the possibilities for housing?**

The university provided you with housing in advance. I was in a shared apartment together with one other person.

**What is the culture of the country like?**

The people are very open and speak very good English. They like to go to hot springs or warm pools and cook a lot with sheep meat. Shoes in the house are a no go.

**Could you give some information about public transport infrastructure?**

The public transport was not very good. There are no trains or metros, only busses. In the capital city these busses are very structured, but in the rest of the country that is not the case. The costs are high as well as the taxi prices. To get to the university, you have to have a car or someone to pick you up with one. There is one bus a day going from a nearby town Borgarnes to the university, and there is no bus going back.

## 6. Expenses

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

The prices were higher than in the Netherlands, mainly for food and gas prices. Alcohol was significantly more expensive. The rent was about the same in the Netherlands, maybe a bit above (520 euros). Public transport was not covered by the government so very expensive. Daytrips to nature reserves were not expensive as hikes are free and everything is in general freely accessible. Going out to eat in a restaurant is very expensive and for this reason I never really did. Airplane tickets off season are not very expensive.

**Additional remarks regarding expenses?**

Groceries were not that expensive as you learn to cook with more cheaper ingredients.

## 7. Free time

### **What are must-sees in the area?**

You can do amazing hikes everywhere around the area. The capital city is a 1-hour drive so perfect for a day trip. Lava caves, hot spring, swimming pool in the area.

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

The hidden hot spring 40 minute's drive from the university.

### **Do you have general tips and tricks about leisure time?**

There is a pub in Hvanneyri open on Tuesdays, Thursdays and sometimes Saturdays.

## 8. Challenges & best moment abroad

### **What challenges did you encounter and how did you overcome them?**

One time I had some difficulty with the public transport and had to wait 5 hours in Reykjavik. This was not very nice at first, but I learned to be more independent and saw new parts of Reykjavik. Also, the first week was a bit difficult and overwhelming with all the new people, but I learned that it takes time to adjust to changes like these.

### **What is your best memory of your time abroad?**

Watching the northern lights with friends in the total darkness and sitting in the hot spring.

## 9. Contact details (optional)

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