



WUR Goes Abroad

1. Student Information

Study programme WUR	Bachelor International Development Studies
Exchange semester (dd/mm/yyyy)	17-07-2023 until 15-12-2023
Exchange destination: University	Stellenbosch
Faculty	Arts and Social Sciences
Country	South Africa
City	Stellenbosch

2. Motivation for exchange

Why did you choose to go on study exchange?

I wanted to go on exchange to experience a new world and a different culture. I am always keen to learn from other people and about other cultures, and I figured the best way to learn this was to experience it first hand.

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

I decided to go to South Africa because I was curious to learn more about the country, the culture and the history of the country. South Africa was also the only possible destination in Sub-Saharan Africa to chose. In South Africa I could choose between Stellenbosch and Pretoria and I chose Stellenbosch because I personally prefer a smaller town surrounded by nature.

3. Accessibility to reach destination

Do you have any tips to reach your exchange destination?

Unfortunately the distance to South Africa means that you have to fly there.

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	An Overview of South African history	6	This course aims to cover the most important events and eras in South African history and assess their impact on contemporary South Africa.	4.5	This is a GEP course, a course designed specifically for international students.
2	Agricultural policy in the South African context	8	This course gives an overview of South African agricultural policy focusing on the themes of international trade, deregulation and land reform.	4	
3	Sustainable Agriculture: Community Gardening	6	This course introduces some of the important elements of sustainable agriculture and some innovative techniques, while engaging students through a practical.	4.5	This is a GEP course, a course designed specifically for international students.
4	Critical Social Theory and Ideology Critique	6	This course focuses on critical theory, covering both the history of the theory, the theory itself and its contemporary implications.	5	
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What is it like to study there?

In general I found the overall workload to be a little higher than at home. Mostly because WUR has periods and at the end of each period there is a study week and some form of assessment. At Stellenbosch however, instead of a period there are semesters, meaning you are doing more courses at once than you would at WUR. Additionally, there is more continuous assessment. This means that instead of having one exam or essay due at the end of the semester, you have continuous assignments to work on throughout the semester. Sometimes, course deadlines and midterm tests overlap, and this means that there are periods of high workload. The study forms, examination and material used in education were similar to those at WUR. There was group work, practicals, tutorials,

readings, exams and essays. An additional benefit of the GEP courses was that they had some excursions.

What is the culture of the university?

The University of Stellenbosch is rather small, making lecturers easily approachable. The difference with WUR however is that the student-lecturer contact is more formal than it is at WUR. Additionally, the rules around examinations and absence are stricter than they are at WUR. Engagements with local students was good, students are very interested and friendly, and everyone is always willing to help you.

What does the university offer students additionally?

The university offers a student mall where you can buy food, coffee and where basic services such as stationary and printing are available. Additionally, the university has many sports associations and societies, but these are not that easy to join as an international student. The university does have a large gym including swimming pools that you can access with a membership.

5. Housing-travelling-living

What are the possibilities for housing?

I lived in university housing, which is where many international students live. There are possibilities for private student housing in town.

What is the culture of the country like?

South Africans are very friendly people, wherever you go you will be greeted with a smile and people are always willing to help you out. Additionally, they are very innovative people, always trying to find solutions for problems that they come across. However, the history of the country is still visible today and this is something that is felt by everyone. South Africans are however very open to discuss anything from politics to their personal lives.

Could you give some information about public transport infrastructure?

The town of Stellenbosch is not that large so you can walk almost everywhere between the centre, your house and university. The university does offer the possibility to rent a bike, but these are unfortunately often stolen. At night it is not advisable to go out alone as this is dangerous and even in a group it is safer to get an uber at night. There is public transport but this is said to not be very safe, so most people uber if they go outside of the city. Over time you will learn what is safe and what if not really safe, but it is still better to be safe than sorry so when in doubt take an uber.

6. Expenses

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

For me, the living expenses were almost equal to those in the Netherlands. Of course that is excluding activities and holidays, as that is something extra. In terms of food, the supermarket prices are comparable and depending on the product can be a little higher or

a little lower than in the Netherlands. The prices for eating and drinking out are lower than at home, which is why many students regularly go out for lunch, dinner and drinks.

Ticket there:

Visa if applicable: You have to pay at least €35 in administration costs. There are costs involved in getting to the embassy and you have to pay for certain services that you need to apply for a visa. These costs are however variable.

Vaccinations if applicable: There are no required vaccinations. There are only recommended vaccinations, but these costs were not applicable to me since I already had those.

Insurances (extra, if applicable): The only thing I needed to get was a South African health insurance which cost me a little more than €150 for 6 months

Housing costs per month & type of housing/accommodation: I paid approximately €400 a month for a room with a private bathroom, and a living room and kitchen shared with 7 other students.

Groceries: About €20 for a normal bag of groceries you would buy at home, lower or higher depending on the type of products you buy.

Public transport: €2 for an uber in town, about €15-€20 for an uber about an hour out of town depending on where you are going and when you are going, but ubers outside town can be split with friends.

Restaurant/going out for dinner: €4-€10 euros for a meal and about €1-€3 euros for a drink.

Daytrips/sight-seeing: This really depends on what and where you go. It can be less expensive if you rent a car instead of taking an uber, and if you show your student card or study visa, you often get into places at the rate of a South African student which is way cheaper.

Additional remarks regarding expenses?

7. Free time

What are must-sees in the area?

Must-sees close to or in Stellenbosch are the university's botanical gardens, the Dorp museum, the wine estates around Stellenbosch and some of the hikes in nature reserves close to town. Outside of town there is Chapman's peak, boulders beach, Cape Town with its museums and historical sites, Lion's head, Table Mountain and the national botanical gardens of Kirstenbosch. In short, there are so many things to do and see close to Stellenbosch.

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

One of my favourite places were the gardens of Babylonstoren.

Do you have general tips and tricks about leisure time?

There are many bars and clubs in Stellenbosch, and everyone has their own favourite. Where you like to go depends on the kind of vibe that fits you best! Additionally, there are many places to go if you want to have a nice dinner out at an affordable price.

Besides, there are many great hiking trails close to Stellenbosch and there is so much to see in terms of nature very close to town.

8. Challenges & best moment abroad

What challenges did you encounter and how did you overcome them? Personally, in the beginning I struggled most with the safety issue here. At home, I can just cycle home when I get tired while going out. Here, that is a bit more difficult as you are either dependent on a group of people to walk with, and even more so on an uber to pick you up. Over time however, you learn how to deal with this and how this works.

Another thing that I found very difficult is the stark and very clearly visible inequality in the country. This is something that made me sad sometimes, however, it really helped to talk about it to my South Africans friends as they could show me different perspectives and share how they coped with this.

What is your best memory of your time abroad?

This is very difficult to choose. One is definitely seeing elephants for the first time, one is going to Tulbagh with my friends and one must be the evenings I spent at my favourite bar with my group of South African friends just talking about philosophy.

9. Contact details (optional)

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