

ERASMUS EXPERIENCE REPORT

<i>University</i>	Christian-Albrechts-Universität Kiel (CAU), Germany
<i>Study program</i>	Nutritional Sciences and Household Economics
<i>Host University</i>	Wageningen University, Netherlands
<i>Erasmus Code</i>	NL WAEGNIN01
<i>Duration of stay</i>	17.08.18-31.01.19

Ever since I started studying I was sure that at some point I will go abroad for an exchange term. However, I never thought that it would be this easy to get there. I was curious how many people would apply and how my chances are. In the end, this is no big deal at all since the university has even some free places which they are trying to get filled. I chose Wageningen University in the Netherlands to host me during my exchange term since this is the leading university when it comes to Food Technology. The course catalogue seemed really interesting to me due to many courses which are not offered at my home university in Kiel. To be quite honest, the application procedure takes time and there are many things which have to be figured out, but nevertheless – it is definitely worth it! As soon as I had the confirmation, I started to search for a room since German students are not on the priority list for student housing in Wageningen. I made an announcement on the Facebook page “Wageningen Student Plaza” (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/192901857389536/>) where almost all things (furniture, kitchen equipment, bikes, ...) are offered. The housing situation in Wageningen is as difficult as it is in every other student city, but after a while I finally found a private room. It was close to university (10 minutes by bike) and the rent was 350€. I went to the Netherlands by train, which means I had to get off at the train station Ede-Wageningen and from there on 25 minutes by bus to reach the centre of Wageningen. It is not a big town with only about 38.500 inhabitants but it has an active student life with potluck dinners, student parties and international events, organized by the university or student associations. I really enjoyed my time in this town! It takes only a 10 minutes walk from the city centre and you find yourself in the middle of nature. If you're looking for more activities, you can visit one of the surrounding cities – Nijmegen/ Arnhem/ Utrecht or even Amsterdam, which are easy to reach by bus or train. The tickets for public transport are quite expensive, whereas the prices for food are quite the same as in Germany. The common supermarkets are “JUMBO” and “ALBERT HEIN”, but also the discounters “LIDL” or “ALDI” are present.

The academic calendar of the university is organized in periods instead of semesters. I stayed for half a year which means 3 periods. The first and the second period took 5 weeks of lecture and the third period only 3 weeks – all followed by one week exam preparation and then exam week. The study handbook (<https://ssc.wur.nl/Handbook/2018>) provides information on the courses, the

periods in which they are offered and whether they are morning/ afternoon- or whole day courses. All the courses of the bachelors program "Food Technology" are offered in english, but some courses from other degrees are still in dutch language. The course workload does not seem to be much in the beginning since only the lecture times are shown, but university keeps you quite busy with group works, practicals and reports. In the first period I followed the courses "General Toxicology" (morning course) and "Principles of Sensory Sciences" (afternoon course), in the second period "Milk in the Dairy Chain" (morning course) and "Management and Marketing" (afternoon course) and in the third period "Insects as Food and Feed" (whole day course). I am really happy with my choices and was lucky with almost all of my lecturers. The content of the lecture gives the theoretical knowledge which has to be converted into practice in the group works. These are a big thing in Wageningen and there are almost no courses without group works. In the end, a report has to be handed in and contributes to the final mark. Although I did enjoy the topics of the courses, I have to admit that I had to invest lots of time into university stuff. During the week I usually spent the whole day from 8 to 18.00 in university to keep up with the workload. At the same time I appreciate all the knowledge that I gained during this half year and the friendships that developed.

The first days after my arrival I took part in the AID program which is definitely recommendable to get to know other people and the city Wageningen. It is organized by the university and the student associations and consists of day activities, games, dinners and parties. Like this you can easily make friends and also decide whether you want to be part of a student association or not. I only stayed for half a year which made it non-sense to join a real association. Firstly, I would have had to pay a membership for one year and secondly I joined the international organisation "ISOW" for the free language courses, yoga, belly dance and a lot more. I took part in a dutch course which was included in the membership (17€/ half year), but from january 2019 onwards, university also offers free dutch courses with ECTS points. Nevertheless, the dutch course from ISOW was lots of fun and I can communicate easily on the market, with people and so on.

The university offers many opportunities to do sports. I signed up by paying a fee of 17,50€ per month and had access to the gym, swimming pool and all the sports classes.

I can definitely recommend to buy a bike! The bus tickets are quite expensive and everyone goes by bike anyway. I bought mine in the first days of the AID on the campus from a private organisation that renewed bicycles and sold them quite cheap. I only paid 50€ for mine and could easily sell it via "Wageningen Student Plaza" at the end of my stay. You can also buy a bike from this page in first place.

In the first days you will also have to enroll yourself at the university. Everything is quite clear mentioned in the letter you will receive before your stay but if you have any questions, you will always get help at the student reception or the international office. To make the enrollment complete, you will need a BSN-number which will be handed out by the municipality as soon as you register with your address.

After all, I really enjoyed my exchange term in Wageningen. The university system is demanding, but helped me a lot to gain knowledge about many topics and about myself. I felt really comfortable in this town and warmly welcomed by all the people.