

# Wageningen, Netherlands – Spring 2020

## Program Handbook

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The exchange program in Wageningen, Netherlands is offered by the College of Agricultural and Life Science (CALS) in partnership with International Academic Programs (IAP) in conjunction with Wageningen University (WU). This Program Handbook supplements handbook(s) or materials you receive from WU as well as the Study Abroad Handbook and provides you with the most up-to-date information and advice available at the time of printing. Changes may occur before your departure or while you are abroad.

Questions about your program abroad (housing options, facilities abroad, etc.) as well as questions relating to your relationship with your host university or academics (e.g. course credit and equivalents, registration deadlines, etc.) should be directed to International Academic Programs at UW-Madison.

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## Contact Information

### On-Site Program Information

Environmental Science

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Social Sciences

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[Socialsciences.studentexchange@wur.nl](mailto:Socialsciences.studentexchange@wur.nl)

Technology and Nutrition

Ellen de Jong

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Life Sciences

Cor Langeveld

[Lifesciences.studentexchange@wur.nl](mailto:Lifesciences.studentexchange@wur.nl)

General Questions

[office.studentexchange@wur.nl](mailto:office.studentexchange@wur.nl)

### UW-Madison Information

CALS Study Abroad

University of Wisconsin-Madison

116 Agricultural Hall

1450 Linden Dr.

Madison, WI 53706

Web: [www.studyabroad.wisc.edu](http://www.studyabroad.wisc.edu)

### Susan Huber Miller

CALS Study Abroad Advisor

(608) 265-0673

[susan.hubermiller@wisc.edu](mailto:susan.hubermiller@wisc.edu)

## Emergency Contact Information

In case of an emergency, call the main IAP Study Abroad number **(608) 265-6329** between 8:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Monday-Friday; after-hours or on weekends call the IAP staff on call at **(608) 516-9440**.

### Embassy Registration

All program participants who are U.S. citizens must register at the U.S. Embassy before departure as this will help in case of a lost passport or other mishap. You can register on-line at <https://step.state.gov/step/>. If you are not a U.S. citizen, register at your home country's embassy or consulate.

United States Embassy

Lange Voorhout 102

2514 EJ The Hague

The Netherlands

+31 (0)70 310 2209

+31 (0)70 361 4688 fax

Email: USCitizenServicesAms@state.gov

U.S. Embassy Homepage: <https://nl.usembassy.gov/>

## Program Dates

Detailed information about arrival dates will be provided by Wageningen University. Please review these details carefully. An orientation for students arriving before period 1 and before period 4 will be provided by IxESN (<http://www.ixesn-wageningen.nl/> or <http://www.aidwageningen.nl/site/en/>). You need to register for this orientation on your own. As the date is not yet available, it is not included on the list below.

**Period 3** 01/06/2020 – 01/27/2020

Winter Orientation: Estimated 02/10/2020 – 02/17/2020

**Period 4** 02/17/2020 – 03/09/2020

**Period 5** 03-16/2020 – 05/04/2020

**Period 6** 05/11/2020 – 06/29/2020

### Semester Program Dates

Please visit Wageningen's webpage for an up to date academic calendar, holiday, and exam registration dates:

<http://www.wageningenur.nl/en/Education-Programmes/Current-Students/Agenda-Calendar-Academic-Year.htm>.

## Immigration Documents

### Passport

A passport is needed to travel to the Netherlands and to obtain your residence permit. Apply immediately for a passport if you do not already have one. Passport information and application forms can be found on the U.S. State Department website (<http://travel.state.gov/passport>). If you already have your passport, make sure it will be valid for at least 6 months beyond the length of your stay abroad.

### Residence Permit

A residence permit is required for all non-EU citizens staying in the Netherlands for a period longer than 3 months. **Prior to arrival**, you will be emailed by a Wageningen Coordinator to begin the process. Please respond to all emails in a timely fashion with complete documents. The International Office for help in submitting an application for a residence permit and register with the local authorities. The following items will be needed:

- Valid passport

- Copy of your housing contract
- University Acceptance Letter
- Passport-size photograph
- Proof of health insurance
- Proof of financial means (e.g. bank statement or declaration from your bank, scholarship/financial aid letter from OSFA, and/or financial statement from your parents, verifying that you have at least 755 Euro per month to cover your stay in the Netherlands—see your instructions for the most up-to-date information)
- Fee (payable by MasterCard/Visa or bank transfer)

The police and/or the town hall (GBA) must be notified of any change of address while you are in The Netherlands and should be notified when you leave the Netherlands. To obtain your resident permit, you will need to travel to Utrecht (~30 minute train ride) to scan your fingers and take the picture that will be used on your card. It is then sent to Wageningen where they offer to hold your card for one day where you can pick it up. If you are not able to pick it up in Wageningen, you will have to travel to Den Bosch to pick it up (~1 hour train ride).

#### **Visa and Residence Permit:**

Wageningen will assist you with your visa and residence permit. US citizens do not need an entry visa, but you will need a residence permit. This is coordinated by Wageningen; you must follow all of their directions. For more information: <https://www.wur.nl/en/Education-Programmes/future-students/Entry-visa-and-residence-permit-prospective-students.htm>

Students receiving **scholarship and financial aid**: Letter of scholarship award specifying amount and duration of award, issued by the financial aid office of the student applicant's home institution. To request this letter, you can call the Office of Student Financial Aid and let them know that you need this for your residence permit application for study abroad. They are typically able to prepare the letter for you with 1-2 business days and have it ready for you to pick up at their office.

#### **Handling Money Abroad**

The official currency of the Netherlands is the Euro (EUR), with 1 Euro equaling 100 cents. As of 6/11/2018, the exchange rate was \$1 USD to 0.85 Euro. You should bring some money with you in cash for incidental purchases as well as for bus and train fares. You may want to exchange money at the airport in the Netherlands if you are not able to exchange money at your local bank beforehand. Be sure to **ask for small bills** so you can pay for transportation to Wageningen and your accommodations without needing too much change. Please check currency exchange sites, such as Oanda at [www.oanda.com](http://www.oanda.com), before departing.

You can exchange money at any bank, post office, or special exchange bank located at all large train stations. Most banks are open Monday through Friday, 9:00am to 5:00 or 6:00pm. The Rabobank is also open on Saturdays for a few morning hours. ATMs are readily available in Wageningen and throughout the Netherlands.

\*You may not be able to exchange U.S. currency once you reach Wageningen, so it is recommended you do this before getting on campus.

### **Banks**

While it is possible for international students to open a bank account in the Netherlands, this may take a week or two to arrange after your arrival. If you are staying in the Netherlands for less than one year, you may have to pay fees to open the account. If you are only here for a short period of time, you may wish to use your account back home if at all possible. Former participants highly recommend opening a bank account as soon as possible as you may pay rent through the account. If you pay with a credit card there is a large fee. The ING bank has been used by former students. Another option is ABN AMRO which has ATM's and a branch located in Wageningen itself.

\*One special note is that if you open a dutch bank account, you are eligible to sign up for a student transit card that can be used on the train/metro/bus throughout all of the Netherlands. By doing so, you will have access to monthly discounts for travel (one example being free transit on the weekends) that will have a monthly payment made through your dutch bank account. This is highly recommended if you wish to travel frequently abroad.

### **ATM/Debit cards**

Cash machines are available throughout the Netherlands. Bring a U.S. ATM card with an international 4 digit pin number to access your checking account (not savings) overseas. Check with your bank prior to departure to make sure you will be able to access your funds from abroad with an ATM card. If your debit/credit card does not have a chip, you CANNOT use it in Wageningen--another very good reason to open a bank account there.

### **Credit cards**

While well-known international credit cards are widely accepted in the Netherlands, they may be inconvenient to use for everyday shopping. Visa and MasterCard are the most commonly accepted credit cards. Some establishments will not accept Visa, it is recommended to bring two (different) forms of payment so you are able to purchase whatever is necessary.

### **Traveler's checks**

Traveler's checks are an option to accessing money in the Netherlands. However, they are usually not accepted in stores and must be exchanged at a bank or cash bureau with additional fees.

### **Packing**

Packing light is a good idea as most items you will need will be available for purchase in the Netherlands. Clothing and shoes are generally expensive to buy in the Netherlands. Students at the university are generally well-dressed; it is a good idea to bring one or two dressy outfits for formal occasions. Bringing enough clothes to layer is also a good idea. Some packing suggestions:

- ❑ four passport-size photographs for various forms
- ❑ small gifts (for roommates, new friends)
- ❑ a warm scarf, hat, mittens/gloves

- ❑ rain clothes
- ❑ a large backpack if planning for extended travel
- ❑ acceptance letter to Wageningen University as an exchange student
- ❑ adaptor/converter (if you are bringing electrical devices)
- ❑ copies of passport and other important documents

## Travel and Arrival Information

When traveling to the Netherlands by plane, you are most likely to arrive at Schiphol Airport, near Amsterdam. At Schiphol railway station buy a single ticket to the train station Ede-Wageningen. When first arriving, it is a **good idea to take a taxi** if you feel your luggage is too cumbersome. Otherwise, you can take the 88 or 86 bus directly to Wageningen for a cheaper option. International Exchange Erasmus Student Network at Wageningen has up-to-date helpful information on arrivals: <http://www.ixesn-wageningen.nl/arriving>.

You may need to apply for "transit visas" to pass through a country on the way to your final destination. Carefully think through what your travel will be to get to your study abroad destination.

U.S. students may encounter problems at German airports if they are not in possession of a study visa for the Schengen State of their final destination. To avoid problems these potential issues, U.S. students who obtain their residence permit upon arrival in the Schengen State (e.g., Netherlands) should either choose a direct flight to avoid transiting through another Schengen airport or should transit through a non-Schengen airport to their final study abroad country.

### Registering at the university

Once you arrive in Wageningen, you must register as an exchange student with the University. You will receive directions from WU before departure. When you register, you will receive a collegekaart (registration card) or a letter stating that you are registered with the University. You must use your registration card or letter when registering for and taking exams or borrowing books from the university libraries. Before you return home to the U.S., you must go to the CSAadm to have your transcript sent to UW-Madison.

### Orientation

For a small fee, students can participate in "Annual Introduction Days" (AID) for the week before classes start. For the Fall semester, this will be prior period 1; for the Spring semester, prior period 4.

During the week there are many activities planned that will allow students to quickly feel at home amongst fellow students and in the city itself. Every year about 95% of the future students participate in the AID. During this week students will be assigned to a group of 10 students and will be accompanied by two mentors. Students will visit all the activities with your group, socialize at the student societies and receive useful information about their study and the city of Wageningen.

Students will get to know the sports associations, student societies, the possibilities for recreational activities, classmates, the WUR and all that Wageningen has to offer. Besides study-related activities there are also other activities such as attending a music festival, a comedy night, a sports day, an open-air movie and a street festival. It is strongly recommended that future students in Wageningen participate in this great week.

Students must notify their exchange coordinator if they would like to have their accommodation available for AID. CALS strongly encourages you to take advantage of the Annual Introduction Days. Dates of orientation will be available from your exchange coordinator. You will pay Wageningen directly for the AID fee.

### **Buddy Program**

This students helping students concept aims at maximizing the joyful experience of staying in Wageningen. A small group of Wageningen students (2-3) introduces a group of new incoming students (10-15) to the active student life within Wageningen. Buddy Families are formed and will stay in contact for at least 1 semester.

As such the new students will not only get a warm welcome, but also get the opportunity to form a little family to foster integration into the Wageningen student community. Also the Buddy Mentors can help the new students out with practical issues, such as registration with the general practitioner, how to get an OV-card or just how to cope with the Dutch mentality.

Visit [ixesn-wageningen.nl/becoming-buddy-student](http://ixesn-wageningen.nl/becoming-buddy-student) for more information.

## **The Academic Program**

### **Wageningen University**

Wageningen University originated in the 19th century at a time when Western Europe was experiencing an agricultural crisis. In the Netherlands, in addition to providing funds and economic support for agriculture, new laws provided for state-run agricultural schools. The first such school was opened in 1876 and since its inception Wageningen University has been orientated towards society and its problems. The first 45 years of agricultural education at Wageningen focused on agriculture, forestry and horticulture but now the University has widened its activities to include environmental control, nature conservation and related subjects. The research at Wageningen University takes its cue from relatively new scientific disciplines such as biotechnology, molecular biology and computer science. For many years, Wageningen scientists have been aware of the ultimate importance of maintaining a habitable planet Earth, as well as providing a reliable food supply for man and beast.

Today, Wageningen University is part of the Wageningen University and Research Centre, a consortium established in 1997. Around 5,000 students study at Wageningen.

### **The Exchange Program**

This is an academic exchange program. Your primary contact will be The Central Student Administration (CSAdm) is located in the Main Building of Wageningen University which assists international students with university registration, visas, residence permits, financial matters, accommodations, registration for exams or courses, and more.

Student Desk Hours of Operation:

Monday through Friday 8:30 am to 2:00 pm

[www.wur.nl](http://www.wur.nl)

### **Student Services Centre**

Students have access to a wide variety of assistance through Wageningen University's Student Services Centre (SSC). At the SSC students can set up consultations with the student psychologist to discuss issues ranging from stress and anxiety to homesickness. Students can also discuss individual situations with the Dean for Students. The Dean for Students can also request exam accommodations provided you have documented need for these services. Please talk with your Study Abroad Advisor for more information.

### **Classes**

Wageningen University offers a wide variety of classes in the sciences. All master's level courses are taught in English as well as a handful of bachelor's level courses. You may take courses at either level if you have the pre-requisite knowledge. As a Wageningen student, you can take courses in any of the University's 17 Bachelor study programmes:

- Agricultural and Bioresource Engineering
- Management, Economics and Consumer Studies
- Biology
- Forest and Nature Conservation
- Organic Agriculture
- Biotechnology
- Soil, Water and Atmosphere
- Animal Science
- Economy and Policy
- Public Health and Society
- International Land and Water Management
- International Development Studies
- Landscape, Planning and Design
- Food Technology
- Environmental Sciences
- Molecular Sciences
- Plant Sciences
- Nutrition and Health

### **Class Schedules**

At Wageningen University, the academic year, which runs from the beginning of September to August, is divided into six terms. An eight weeks' term consists of three parts: six weeks for lectures and



practicals, one week for examination preparation and one week for examinations. Four week terms consist of four weeks for class and lectures.

In period 1, 2, 5 and 6 you can select a total of 12 ECTS credits. In period 3 and 4 at total of 6 ECTS credits. You can select two courses per period (one in the morning, one in the afternoon)

Students studying in the Fall typically take classes during periods 1 and 2. Students studying in the Spring take classes during periods 3, 4, and 5 **or** 4, 5, and 6. You may opt to take classes in period 6 if the dates do not interfere with your returning Fall semester at UW. Note that the orientation for the UW spring equivalent takes place prior to period 4. Please refer to the calendar below for academic calendar information.

Please visit <http://www.wageningenur.nl/en/Education-Programmes/Study-Abroad-and-Exchange-Students/Show/Planning-Selection-of-courses.htm> for more information on class schedules.

### **Exams**

Most courses are graded based on written exams with multiple choice or open questions. Many practicals require you to write a short report. At least two weeks prior to taking your exams, you must register with the Central Student Administration, either at their desk or online. Students are given one week between the end of classes and exams to prepare for their exams. Re-examinations are given in August, at the end of the summer break. You must register for your exams. If you have registered for your course through SSC online, then you have been registered for your exam.

### **Classes Available**

Course offerings depend on the semester you are abroad. Generally, courses are only offered once a year. A listing can be found on Wageningen University's website: <https://ssc.wur.nl/Handbook> (click on courses in the green top bar, by Department will give you all classes, not limited to period). Click on the course number to determine if the class is taught in English and for a more detailed description of the class.

### **Language Courses**

The Language Center (CENTA) offers a variety of courses for students and staff of Wageningen University. Tutored Dutch language courses are offered at various levels for international students. Some of these courses are free of charge for registered Wageningen students.

### **Registration**

Students will fill out a learning agreement as part of the application process. After the study program has been approved by Wageningen, students can register for their courses. To register contact the lecturer (contact person) mentioned in the course description. Select the person and you will get the address & e-mail. Tell him or her that you are a new exchange student and that you are not able to register electronically yet. Add your full name, date of birth & selected courses (+ codes) to your message. You should register only for the courses you have selected for the first period of your study at Wageningen University. If you have already registered and decide to change your study-programme,

do not forget to cancel the registration of the courses you are not going to attend. You can do this the same way you registered.

Students can select two courses per period. Two courses (12 ECTS) per period may not seem very much, but this is quite a considerable workload (42 hrs/week), including lectures and “practicals” (computer work), additional work in individual and group assignments, presentations, and preparation work (reading) for classes. Please note that in general you can follow one course during morning hours and one in the afternoon.

### **Equivalents and Course Equivalent Request (CER)**

Each course you take abroad must be assigned a UW-Madison “equivalent” course in order for your grades and credits to be recorded on your UW-Madison transcript. In order to establish UW-Madison course equivalents for your study abroad courses, you will submit a Course Equivalent Request (CER). Detailed information on the UW course equivalent process is available in the IAP General Study Abroad Handbook.

**Credits and Conversions:** In the Netherlands, an academic year consists of 60 ECTS credits. ECTS (European Credits Transfer System) credits are a numerical value (between 1 and 60) allocated to course units to describe the student workload required to complete them. They reflect the quantity of work each course unit requires in relation to the total quality of work necessary to complete a full year of academic study, that is, lectures, practical work, seminars, tutorials, field work, private study (in the library or at home) and examinations or other assessment activities. ECTS is thus based on a full student workload and not limited to contact hours only.

1 full academic year = 60 ECTS credit  
1 semester = 30 ECTS credit

An average course consists of 200 study hours (classes, preparation, and exams are included), and thus equals 7.5 ECTS credit-points. In general, students at the university take 4 courses each semester.

**Please be very careful when selecting courses.** Note that courses offered may carry fewer than the 5 ECTS (equivalent to 3 UW credits). Courses must be worth at least 2.5 ECTS to be approved at UW. Courses under 2.5 ECTS should be combined with other courses of similar content to create a UW course equivalent. The combined courses should be at least 5 ECTS to provide meaningful credit.

For example: *Systematic Botany* (2 ECTS) and *Practical course with Field Exercise in Systematic Botany* (3 ECTS) = UW's Botany 400 (3 UW credits).

It is possible to have courses approved as 2 UW credits instead of 3 UW credits. However, if you are taking courses to apply to major, certificate or college requirements, the ECTS must be equivalent to the UW courses credits. For example, Botany 130 is 5 credits at UW. If this course is needed for your major, certificate, or college requirement, you need to combine Wageningen courses to equal at least 9 ECTS. If you have any questions on course credit, please contact your Study Abroad Advisor.

**Credit Conversion Scale:**

<b>ECTS Credits</b>	<b>UW Madison Credits</b>
2.5	2
3	2
4	2
5 or 5,5	3
6 or 6,5	3
7 or 7,5	4
8	4
9	5
10	5
12	6
12,5	7
15	8

**Limits and Load:** UW-Madison students are required to be enrolled full-time when studying in the Netherlands. Students are required to take the equivalent of 12 to 16 UW-Madison credits each semester, with 18 credits as the maximum.

**Pass/Fail/Drop/Audit**

Please refer to the General Study Abroad Handbook for academic policies on pass/fail, and refer to your MyStudyAbroad portal for the pass/fail request deadline for your program.

**Grades and Grade Conversions**

The grading system used by Dutch universities is based on number scale of 1 (very poor) to 10 (outstanding). The following scale has been established for translating grades from Wageningen to UW-Madison:

<u><b>Wageningen</b></u>	<u><b>University of Wisconsin-Madison</b></u>
7.5 - 10	A
7.0 - 7.4	AB
6.5 - 6.9	B
6.0 - 6.4	BC
5.5 - 5.9	C
5.0 - 5.4	D

Upon completion of your program, you will request a transcript from Wageningen to be sent to UW before your departure. If you forget, it will delay receipt of your transcript and recording your courses on your UW transcript.

## University Facilities

### Libraries

The Wageningen UR Library is the national agricultural library in the Netherlands. The Library has become a leading center for and about agro-production, soil, water and air management, and environmental issues. The university library system has about 29 different libraries throughout the campus, some with a wide variety of resources and others with department-oriented information sources.

Along with the library's hard copies of books and other reference materials, electronic resources and inter-library loans from all over the world are available.

Most campus libraries are typically open from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm Monday through Friday; you can check online for a specific library's hours of operation: <http://library.wur.nl>. The Leeuwenborch Library has extra opening hours from October 1 to July 1, including evening and Saturday hours.

All libraries have printing and photocopying facilities for your use. You use your student ID to pay for printing and other services. You are able to put money to your student card online with any credit/debit card. Here is the link to do this: [ewallet.wur.nl](http://ewallet.wur.nl) Group and individual study areas are also available in the libraries. A maximum of 10 people can use the group study areas at one time, which are equipped with a PC and a white board. Call the library Helpdesk (0317-484440) to reserve a group study area. The libraries do not allow you to bring your coat or bag into the library. Lockers are available to store your things while you use the library. Library loans are free of charge, but don't forget your card so you can check out books!

If you have any questions or need more information, contact the Library Helpdesk at:

Tel: 0317-484440

Email: [helpdesk.library@wur.nl](mailto:helpdesk.library@wur.nl)

Website: <http://library.wur.nl>

### Computer Facilities

Many computer facilities throughout campus are available for student use, including in libraries and faculty buildings. Check with building managers for times the computer facilities are open. As a Wageningen University student, you will have access to internet, email and other programs on any of the university's computers.

Once you are registered as a student, the Central Student Administration (CSA) will provide you with a CSA internet account. This account gives access to the CSA website and can be used to register for

exams and to obtain information about registration for classes and grades. Details on how to activate your account will be sent to your personal email. The CSA website also gives access to a WURnet account, enabling you to gain access to your own mailbox as well as to your own work area for writing/editing/saving files. More information about your WURnet account can be found on the CSA site: [www.wur.nl](http://www.wur.nl).

### **Cafeteria**

At most student flats or houses, students take turns preparing group dinners. There are several supermarkets, specialized food shops, and open air markets near the university where you can buy food. Costs are shared by the participants. A mensa is another option for lunch or dinner. A mensa is an inexpensive food stand run by a student club (SSR, KSV, Ceres and Unitas; see section on student organizations). The mensae are located in the organization's building and serve both vegetarian and meat dishes. These cafeteria options will not accept cash or visa cards, so it is important that you have either a dutch card or a credit card with a pin that works abroad.

## **Living Abroad**

### **Netherlands**

The Netherlands is a small country; it is only about 200 km wide from east to west and 300 km long from north to south. The Netherlands, bordered by Belgium in the south and Germany in the east, is a flat country that lies in the marshy delta of the Rhine River, one of Europe's largest rivers. The water from the river and the North Sea, which borders the Netherlands in the north and west, enhances agricultural production through fertile sediment deposits and also devastates society through floods. To solve this problem, the Dutch have built an extensive network of dikes and mounds, which are particularly important in those areas of the country that lie below sea level. Due to its proximity to the sea, the Netherlands enjoys a temperate marine climate with cool summers and mild winters. Excessively hot days are rare in the summer and snow is only a possibility in the winter; temperatures do not fluctuate much within a given day or throughout the year. Average temperatures vary between 2 degrees Celsius/36 degrees Fahrenheit in January to 17 degrees Celsius/63 degrees Fahrenheit in July. Rain is prevalent year round. Due to the country's flatness, the Netherlands tends to be a rather windy place at all times of the year.

The Netherlands is run under a constitutional monarchy. The Monarchy, which is hereditary, is the Chief of State. The Prime Minister, appointed by the Monarch, is the Head of Government. The Netherlands is divided into 12 administrative provinces. Amsterdam is the nation's capital while The Hague is the seat of government.

The Netherlands has a prosperous and open economy, which depends heavily on foreign trade. Although economic growth fell in the period 2001-2004, with the global economic slowdown, prior to this period, the Netherlands' economic growth rate averaged well over 4%, well above the EU average.

The population of the small country is roughly 16.5 million people, making the Netherlands one of the most densely populated areas in the world. The population is growing at less than 1% per year. Ethnically, about 83% of the population is Dutch and 9% of the population is of non-Western origin. Dutch and Frisian are the two official languages, and English is widely spoken as a second language.

Traditionally, the Dutch eat two cold meals (breakfast and lunch) and one hot meal (dinner) every day. The main component of breakfast and lunch is bread. Dinner usually consists of meat or fish accompanied by potatoes and vegetables, followed by dessert. Potatoes may be replaced with rice, pulses or pasta. The Dutch also consume a large amount of dairy products and enjoy a coffee or tea break in the morning and afternoon. Also, the water from the tap is safe to drink.

The Dutch typically eat early, so some restaurants might close earlier than you would expect. In the Netherlands, going out to eat can be an activity in itself. As a result, meals out are very leisurely. Servers respect this and do not interrupt you. Therefore, you should always ask for your bill when you want it. In Wageningen, there are very few places to eat after 6pm, so it is important to plan for that when you are buying groceries and making dinner. In addition, there are not many fast food options as well, so be prepared to learn how to cook and make meals every week.

The majority of the population who practice a religion in the Netherlands practice Roman Catholicism (31%). The second most common religion is Dutch Reformed, representing 13% of the population. Other religions practiced in the Netherlands include Calvinism, Islam and more. Many Dutch, 41%, are not members of a church.

### **Wageningen**

Wageningen is a municipality and a historical town in the central [Netherlands](#), in the province of Gelderland and it is often described as “small and cozy but with the allure of a big city.” It is famous for Wageningen University, which specializes in life sciences. The city has 34,348 inhabitants (as of January 1, 2006), of which many thousands are students. The university and associated institutes, now consolidated in Wageningen University and Research Center (WUR), employs about 7400 people. Wageningen also is the central city in Food Valley. Food Valley is the Dutch food & nutrition cluster concentrated around WUR and comprised of many institutes, companies and state-of-the-art facilities in the food & nutrition field. Food Valley is regarded as the largest food & nutrition Research & Development clusters in the world.

Wageningen is situated on the north bank of the Lower Rhine, ("[Nederrijn](#)" in Dutch) and at the border between the Gelderse valley and the [Veluwe](#), of which the southwest hill is called the Wageningse berg. Wageningen can be reached by car from highways A12, A15 and A50, and from railroad station Ede-Wageningen where a 15 minute bus drive connects to the central bus station in the town center.

Wageningen is also world famous for its military history. On May 5, 1945, the German general [Blaskowitz](#) surrendered to the Canadian general Charles Foulkes, which officially ended the Second World War in the Netherlands. On May 5, which in the Netherlands is Liberation Day, the city hosts a large festival to celebrate the liberation. At this festival, veteran soldiers parade through the city and

are honored for their service. Wageningen is home to the Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation ACP-EU (CTA).

## **Housing**

Housing for exchange students is coordinated by the student housing office in the Student Service Centre for all international students. In order to receive housing you may go through ROOM, whether looking for university housing or private accommodations. You will be housed through ROOM or Heyday (on-campus residence halls). Private accommodations vary between small apartments and larger complexes. Read the description carefully and inquire with any questions. You can learn more about the application process here: <https://www.room.nl/en/> Students should register as early as possible.

Heyday rooms for international students are furnished with a bed, mattress, desk, chair, wardrobe, a small safe, a bedcover, a pillow and a sheet. Your room will also have an internet connection. Although you will have to purchase a router to access this. The rooms in the apartment buildings are divided into groups ("corridors") of six to eighteen rooms. Each corridor has a common room with a TV and kitchen facilities. Students often cook together. You can use the common shared kitchen dishes, pans and utensils so that you do not have to provide your own. Additionally, there are 'self-contained' rooms where you are not a part of a corridor and do not share a bathroom. These are less common and it is recommended that you contact Idealis if you are interested in a self-contained room.

The Heyday buildings also have a washing machine. Rent depends on the type of room. You can rent a room beginning either the 1st or the 16th of each month. You will receive the address about two weeks before your actual rental date. If you choose to cancel your room early, you must inform Wageningen at least one month in advance. Like start dates, cancel dates can also be either the 1st or 16th of the month. You can pick up your keys at the housing office on the 1st/16th of the month that your rental contract begins. Check hours as times can be quite limited. If the 1st/16th is a Saturday or Sunday, the housing office is closed and you can get your key on any following work day between 9:00 am and 4:00 pm (office hours). You can also pick up your key during office hours any work day after the start of your rental agreement.

Some student housing is in close proximity to campus so students can walk to and from the university. Biking is the best way to get around campus and the city. You may consider purchasing a bike during your study at Wageningen University. You can buy a bike through the facebook group, at the market on Saturdays, or at a bike shop.

See the following link for more information on Heyday office hours and contacts:

<http://www.studentlivingwageningen.nl/>

Students who live in private accommodations will likely live in a single room and share bathroom and kitchen facilities with both Dutch and other international students. Students may also explore private accommodations, and the IxESN student group has some information: <https://ixesn-wageningen.nl/housing-0>

## Student Life

Joining a club or student organization while abroad is a great way to meet people with similar interests, become involved in the university, and learn more about the local culture. Here are some of the student organizations you could join while studying at Wageningen:

### *Study Associations:*

- Codon (Biotechnology)
- Di-Et-Tri (Nutrition and Health)
- Heeren XVII (Agrotechnology)
- Mercurius (Management, Economics, and Consumer Studies)
- Nicolus Appert (Food Technology)
- Nitocra (International Land and Water Management)
- Semper Florens (Plant Science)
- De Veetelers (Animal Science)
- WSBS Sylvatica (Forest and Nature Conservation) *Student Associations:*
- Unitas
- International Student Organization Wageningen
- International Student Panel
- Wageningen Student Choir and Orchestra

The International Exchange Erasmus Student Network coordinates welcome events, exchange student meet-ups, bicycle rentals and more: <http://www.ixesn-wageningen.nl/>

## Sport Centre de Bongerd (USB)

Sport Centre de Bongerd (USB) is Wageningen University's multi-functional sport centre with both indoor and outdoor facilities. USB facilities include a track, gymnasium, climbing wall, four squash courts, six tennis courts, four outdoor fields, and a fitness room. The Sport Centre is open seven days a week. To become a member, you need to pay an initial monthly fee, which can then be canceled at anytime.

As a student, you can also participate in the Sport and Movement programme, which offers 31 sport activities and provides specialized instruction in a wide range of sports. The Sport and Movement programme also offers unique sports such as aerobics, aqua fit, fitness, squash, Tai Bo and inline skating. To use the USB or participate in the Sport and Movement Programme, you must have a valid sports card. This card also allows you to use the swimming pool and join one of the university's 17 student sports clubs. The sports card can be purchased at the USB Monday through Friday between 9:00 am and 11:00 pm. For more information about the USB or the Sports Movement programme, visit <http://www.wageningenur.nl/en/Wageningen-Campus/sports-centre-de-bongerd.htm> .

## Transportation

### Bus



Buses run regularly from Wageningen bus station to nearby towns such as Ede, Arnhem, and Nijmegen. Tickets can be bought on the bus. If you use the bus often, however, it is much cheaper to buy an “OV-chipkaart”. This is a reloadable card that allows you to use the train, bus, or metro anywhere in the Netherlands. As mentioned above, if you have a dutch bank account you are able to buy a student account with monthly discounts on travel.

### **Train**

Although the Netherlands has an extensive railway network with regular train services, Wageningen has no railway station. The nearest stations are Ede-Wageningen and Rhenen. Both of these stations can be reached by bus from the Wageningen bus station. Information about tickets and special arrangements at reduced prices (weekend return ticket deals, off-peak discount pass, RailPlus) and about departure/arrival times may be found at the railway stations or online at [www.ns.nl](http://www.ns.nl). A very handy website to plan out trips is [www.9292.nl](http://www.9292.nl). This is also an app you can download on your phone for handy travel times (9292 is the name of the app).

For national train transportation, a Voordeelurenkaart can be purchased and is valid for one year. This card provides a 40% discount (watch for time constraints with the card – typically you can’t use it before 9 am on weekdays) nationally. If you plan to travel by train a great deal within the Netherlands, this card is highly recommended. You will need 1 passport photo and the cards costs approximately 55 euros.

### **Bicycle**

Student housing is relatively close to campus and can easily be reached by bicycle. You can buy a new or used bike at several shops or through advertisements in the newspapers. You may wish to bring a U lock from home as they are more expensive in the Netherlands. Dutch law requires that your bike have a working light for night riding. Bring your helmet from home if you are planning on biking. Don’t forget to lock your bike with a good lock! Some of the bicycle shops in Wageningen include:

- **Profile Pro Wageningen De Fietsspecialist**, Churchillweg 27
- **Recycle Rijwielhandel**, Heerenstraat 37/39
- **Wetering B.V. Rijwielhandel B.V.**, Harnjesweg 86
- **Breet Bikes**, Bevrijdingsstraat 24

The most recent bike shop (as of 6/05/2019) – Swapfiets, offers a monthly deal of 13 euros/month to rent a bike. You can cancel your subscription at the end of your exchange.

- Swapfiets, Bergstraat 18, 6701 AD Wageningen, Netherlands

### **Taxi**

Travel by taxi is expensive. The following are the names and telephone numbers of some Wageningen taxi companies:

- **Buurman**: 0317-411111
- **Taxi Rewa**: 0317-460000
- **E. Meurs**: 0317-412345
- **A. Leewis**: 0317-413050

## **Health and Safety**

According to the U.S. State Department Travel Information on The Netherlands, "The Netherlands has a low crime rate." Crimes of property, however, do occur. Students should be particularly aware of keeping their bikes locked at all times. Violent crime is much less common in the Netherlands than in the U.S. Remember to take care of personal belongings in crowded surroundings such as buses during rush hour, markets, etc.

## **Emergency Numbers**

*General Emergencies (Police, Ambulance, Fire Brigade): 112*

*Fire Brigade (non-urgent): 0317-412237*

*Police (non-urgent): 0900-8844*

*VU Medisch Centrum: 020-4444444*

*De Boelelaan 1117, 1081 HV Amsterdam*

*Ziekenhuis Gelderse Vallei: 0318-434343*

*Willy Brandtlaan 10, 6716 RP Ede*

## **Communications**

When making calls, keep in mind time zone differences ([www.timeanddate.com/worldclock](http://www.timeanddate.com/worldclock)). To make an international call to the United States, dial the access code for the country from which you are calling plus the United States country code (always "1") followed by the appropriate U.S. area code and local number. To call internationally from the United States, dial "011", the country code, city access code (if necessary) and the phone number. Country and city codes can be found online ([www.timeanddate.com/worldclock/dialing.html](http://www.timeanddate.com/worldclock/dialing.html)). Some of above steps can vary if you are using a calling card.

## **Calling to the Netherlands**

*International access code: 011*

*Country code: 31*

*Wageningen city code: (0)317*

To call the Netherlands from the United States, your family and friends must dial the international access code, followed by the country code and Wageningen's city code, and finally your phone number: 011 + 31 + 317 + telephone number

## **Calling from the Netherlands**

*International access code: 00*

*Country code: 1*

To call the United States from the Netherlands, you will need to dial the international access code, the United States' country code, the area code and phone number: 00 + 1 + area code + telephone number.

## **Calling within the Netherlands**

Please note that when you make calls within the Netherlands you must include a 0 before the city code: 0317 + telephone number. However, the 0 is dropped when friends and family make international calls to the Netherlands, as shown in B above.

## **Mobile Phones**

Mobile phones are part of day-to-day life in the Netherlands. If you decide you want a mobile while studying in the Netherlands, prepaid phone plans are available, so you can add money/minutes to your phone as you use it. There are five major mobile phone providers in the Netherlands: KPN, Vodafone, Telfort, Orange, and T-Mobile. Rates vary depending on the time of day you are calling, whether you call a land-line or mobile phone and whether or not you call a mobile with the same provider as your own. If you choose to get a mobile phone, be sure to ask local people about the different providers so you can choose the provider that best fits your needs. Another option is to bring your phone from home and buy a pay-as-you go sim card in the Netherlands.

## **Internet**

As previously mentioned, internet is available to students on campus. Off campus, internet cafes are abundant in Wageningen and throughout the Netherlands. Prices vary in internet cafes but can be as low as €1 per hour. An internet connection may also be available in your accommodation but it depends on where you live.

Internet is available through an Ethernet cord in all student residence halls. Additionally, all buildings on campus and most restaurants/cafes downtown will have free WiFi.

## **Post Office**

Post offices in the Netherlands offer more services than just postal services. In addition to buying stamps and mailing letters or packages you can also exchange money, make long-distance phone calls, do your banking or visit a travel agency at the post office. There is one postal delivery each day, except Sundays and public holidays. The Main Post Office is open Monday through Friday from 9:00 am to 6:00 pm and Saturday from 9:00 am to 1:30 pm.

## **Skype**

Skype is a convenient and inexpensive way to keep in touch with your friends and family at home ([www.skype.com](http://www.skype.com)). If the person you are talking to also has Skype, talking to each other over Skype is free. You can also use the program to call landline phones or cell phones for a very small fee per minute. If you add money to your Skype account while abroad, it may take several business days for it to register and for you to use. Plan accordingly.

## **ADDITIONAL RELEVANT INFORMATION/WEBSITES OF INTEREST**

U.S. State Department Students Abroad site:

<http://www.studentsabroad.state.gov/>

UW-Madison International Academic Programs

<http://www.studyabroad.wisc.edu>

U.S. State Department:

<http://travel.state.gov>

Center for Disease Control  
<http://www.cdc.gov/travel/>

Current exchange rates  
<http://www.oanda.com>

Lonely Planet  
<http://www.lonelyplanet.com>

### **Travel guides & other books about the Netherlands**

Learn as much as you can about the Netherlands before you leave. Travel guides are helpful for providing background information on the Netherlands' history, geography, politics, and culture as well as for assisting you if you travel to other regions of the country. Novels also provide a glimpse into Dutch history, landscape, and way of life.

#### **Recommended Travel Guides:**

- *Culture Shock! Netherlands* by Hunt Janin and Ria Van Eil
- *Michelin the Green Guide Netherlands* by Michelin Travel Publications
- *The Netherlands* by Sarah E. De Capua
- *Lonely Planet Netherlands* by Reuben Acciano and Jeremy Gray

#### **Recommended Novels:**

- *My 'Dam Life: Three Years in Holland* by Sean Condon
- *The Undutchables: An observation of the Netherlands, its Culture and its Inhabitants* by Colin White and Laurie Boucke
- *The Diary of a Young Girl* by Anne Frank

### **9292.nl**

This website is like the Dutch version of google maps. You input a starting and ending point and it will tell you exactly how to get there via public transportation. It is also a smartphone application. Public transportation in the Netherlands is extremely efficient and reliable.

### **Grocery Stores**

There are several grocery stores in Wageningen. They include C100, Hooglviet, Albert Heijn, and Jumbo. Jumbo is the closest store to campus. At grocery stores in the NL, you either bring your own canvas bags or they will charge you to use plastic/paper bags. You can also buy the plastic bags and then reuse them.

### **Travel around Europe**

If you will be travelling outside of the Netherlands, there are a couple handy resources to utilize. Studentuniverse.com is a website that helps you find airfare. These will be larger airplane companies. Also, ryanair.com and easyjet.com are budget airlines that will only fly out of smaller airports.

Similarly, Omio (formerly known as GoEuro) is great for inter-European flights, busses, or train rides and offer the cheapest deal out of every option. I also recommend [hostelworld.com](http://hostelworld.com) for any housing needs. They offer housing in any city within the world and provide a lot of options.

## **Diversity Climate In-Country**

The Netherlands is known to be an open and tolerant country, with international students from all over the world choosing to study there each year. The city of Wageningen, while not overly large, attracts diverse groups of people due to the university, and students can expect to find resources and support available on campus, if not in the community at large.

### **Racial/Ethnic Minority**

waves of immigration have caused some tensions. Students of ethnic minorities may be perceived to be from nations other than the US because of this.

Wageningen University has a host of student groups including Latin Americans in Holland and the Chinese Association of Students and Scholars. A list of more groups can be found [here](#) and [here](#).

### **Sexual Orientation**

The Netherlands is progressive in relation to LGBTQ rights. They were the first country in the world to legalize same-sex marriage in modern times, and LGBTQ students should feel safe and comfortable in being open with their sexual orientation. Supportive organizations, establishments and events in relation to LGBTQ identities exist all across the country.

SHOUT Wageningen is a university student group for LGBTQ individuals. See their [website](#) for more details.

### **Disabilities**

Many places have been made accessible for those with physical disabilities, but older buildings may still not be completely adapted. In general, students with disabilities can expect to have plentiful resources and adequate access across the country.

Students with disabilities at Wageningen are encouraged to schedule an appointment with a student dean or exchange coordinator to talk about options for accommodations. A doctor's statement is often necessary for modifications to be made. Accommodations in courses, housing and educational spaces can all be made, within reason. Their [website](#) has more information on accommodations and contact info.

[Counselling services](#) are available for quick walk-in sessions as well as scheduled appointments. Student should be aware that scheduling an appointment is done via email and may take up to two weeks, therefore availability may be insufficient at times. Students are also able to see the [student dean](#) for guidance.

## **Religion**

The Netherlands is a largely secular country and respects religious freedom. It has one of the largest Muslim populations in the EU, but in recent years, some anti-Muslim sentiment has arisen due to large waves of immigration.

WU has multiple student religious groups like the International Christian Fellowship, Student Chaplaincy and Muslim Student Association.

[Nik](#) is also an organization for Jewish communities in the Netherlands.

## **Women**

Female students in the Netherlands can expect a level of protection and respect equivalent to the US.

WU offers [confidential advisor](#) support if students experience persistent unwanted attentions or harassment.

## **Past Participant Advice**

The testimonial below is compiled from past participant's evaluations; they reflect various students' experiences and are included to provide different perspectives.

### **Financial**

"An average room costs between €250-300 including utilities."

"Get a dutch bank account - it'll make your life a whole lot easier!"

"Open a Dutch banking account. In much of the Netherlands, they do not accept US credit or debit cards in their card-reading machines. It's weird, I know. With your Dutch banking account, you will get a Dutch card. These are very nice because they work by just tapping the card against the machine. Also, then you don't have to convert euros to USD, because your Dutch bank account will already be in Euros. I recommend using the bank ABN Amro, as they have branches everywhere, and work with students often."

### **Safety**

"Extremely safe, I never once felt nervous about my town. [There were] very friendly people looking out"

### **Academics**

"I was able to take courses that were in my field of study and take some that allowed me to explore new areas. It was interesting to look at my field of study from a different point of view."

"Perhaps for any future exchange students interested in courses at MSc level: the students have to register at least 4 weeks before start of a course. If they cannot register the official way, they just

contact the course coordinator (again 4 weeks in advance). Any registration request after this deadline cannot be guaranteed to result in actual participation.”

“Wageningen University schools some of the most brilliant minds in the world in the field of agriculture and life sciences. This school allowed me to get a hands on look at greenhouse technology, sustainable systems, and the modern breakthroughs in organic agriculture & crop genetics. This empowers me to seek a future involving these concepts.”

### **Life Abroad**

“[Check out] the international student organizations we have are called IxESN (they really have to participate, this is so much fun!) and ISOW

<https://www.facebook.com/IxESNWageningen/?fref=ts>

<http://www.ixesn-wageningen.nl/>

<https://www.facebook.com/ISOWageningen/?fref=ts>

<http://www.isow-wageningen.org/>”

“Everybody in Holland uses Whatsapp: an app that uses wifi to connect people through there telephone numbers.”

“You can find a sublet room, sublet or buy a bicycle, or buy furniture from student Facebook groups.”

“It is a very fun city to be in if you like the college life but still like nature and space.”

“I would suggest learning some Dutch. They say it is not necessary, but it is very helpful. Especially because Wageningen is not located near any big city such as Amsterdam, everyone speaks Dutch, not English. Young people can obviously speak really good English, but a lot of older people can not. Learning basic phrases such as hello, goodbye, please, thank you, bathroom, etc. are helpful in everyday life such as on the bus and at the grocery store. The university offers some lessons, I think.”

“For traveling around the Netherlands, you will want to get an OV-Chipkaart immediately when you land at Schiphol Airport. This works like a debit card for all of the public transportation in the country, i.e. buses, trains, and trams. You reload the card at machines located at the stations. “