

Wageningen, Netherlands – Academic Year 2023-2024 Program Handbook



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

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UW-Madison Information

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University of Wisconsin-Madison

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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.

U.S. Embassy and Consulate Information

U.S. Embassy Address: John Adams Park 1, 2244 BZ Wassenaar

U.S. Consulate Address: Museumplein 19, 1071 DJ Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Phone Information:

- U.S. Citizens in the Netherlands with emergencies, please call 020 575-5309
- Outside of Office Hours, contact: 070 310-2209
- Outside of Netherlands: +31 (0) 20 575-5309 or +31 (0) 70 310-2209

E-mail: AmsterdamUSC@state.gov

Website: <https://nl.usembassy.gov/embassy-consulate/>

Program Dates

Detailed information about arrival dates will be provided by Wageningen University. Please review these details carefully.

Orientation week (“Annual Introduction Days”): Typically takes place in mid-August and early February. You need to register for this orientation on your own. You can find dates and details here: www.aidwageningen.nl/en.

Structure of the Academic Year

The academic year is divided in six periods. The Autumn term (September) consists of period 1 to 3 and the Spring term (February) consists of period 4 to 6. Learn more about the [structure of the academic year](#). There is also more information below on page 8.

Academic Calendar

You can find the academic calendar here: <https://www.wur.nl/en/Education-Programmes/Current-Students/Agenda-Calendar-Academic-Year.htm>.

Fall Semester Orientation week/Annual Introduction (mid-August)

Study Period 1, Education and Exams 9/4/2023 – 10/27/2023

Study Period 2, Education and Exams 10/30/2023 – 12/22/2023

Winter Holidays

Study Period 3, Education and Exams 1/8/2024 – 2/2/2024

Resit Exams for Periods 1+2

Spring Semester Orientation week/Annual Introduction Days (early February)

Study period 4, Education and Exams 2/12/2024 – 3/8/2024

Study period 5, Education and Exams 3/11/2024 – 5/3/2024

Resit Exams for Periods 2+3+4

Study period 6, Education and Exams 5/13/2024 – 7/5/2024

Summer Holidays

Resit Exams for Period 5 7/11/2024 – 7/19/2024

Resit Exams for Period 6

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.

Visa and Residence Permit

US citizens do not need an entry visa, but non-US passport holders may need a MVV entry visa. Wageningen University will reach out to you to assist you with applying for one if you should need one.

A residence permit is required for all non-EU citizens staying in the Netherlands for a period longer than 3 months. Prior to arrival, a Wageningen Coordinator will reach out to you to begin the application process (note: you should not begin the process yourself). Please respond to all emails in a timely fashion with all requested documents. The cost of the Residence Permit is 171 Euros, or ~\$185 USD. You can find more information here: <https://www.wur.nl/en/Education-Programmes/future-students/Entry-visa-and-residence-permit-prospective-students.htm>.

Students Receiving Scholarship and Financial Aid

You may be required to submit a Letter of Scholarship Award specifying amount and duration of award as part of your Residence Permit application, 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. You can find the most current currency conversion to US Dollars using a number of websites, including this one: <https://www.xe.com/currencyconverter/>. 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 upon arrival at the airport in the Netherlands. Be sure to ask for small bills so you can pay for transportation to Wageningen and your accommodations without needing too much change.

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.

Banks

Former participants highly recommend opening a bank account as soon as possible as you may pay rent through the account. The ING bank has been used by former students. 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. For information about opening a bank account, visit WUR's website on the topic:

<https://www.wur.nl/en/Education-Programmes/Student-Service-Centre/Show-SSC/Opening-Bank-account.htm>.

Even if you plan to open Dutch bank account upon arrival, you are strongly advised to bring at least one credit card (Visa or Mastercard) and cash for the first month since it will take a 3-4 weeks before you receive the living allowance from the University on your Dutch bank account. You will need the credit card or cash to pay for rent, groceries, transportation, possibly a bike and sometimes furniture, and books. You are advised to bring at least 300 euros.

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. Most ATMs charge a withdrawal fee, so you may want to hunt around for ATMs with lower fees. 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. Make sure you are aware whether your credit card charges international fees so you are not surprised by any.

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. Otherwise, you can take the 88 bus directly to Wageningen. International Exchange Erasmus Student Network at Wageningen has up-to-date helpful information on arrivals: <http://www.ixesn-wageningen.nl/arriving>.

If you plan to travel to WUR from another country abroad, 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 CSAdm 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. You can find details here: www.aidwageningen.nl/en.

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 WUR exchange coordinator if they would like to have their accommodation available for AID. You will pay Wageningen directly for the AID fee.

ESN Buddy Program

ESN Wageningen is an international student organization for both international and Dutch students. We are part of the Erasmus Student Network (ESN) which is located all over Europe! We will make your time in Wageningen unforgettable because we organize more than 100 social, cultural, integration, travel and sports events throughout the year. Make sure that you follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) to stay up to date!

Become a member of ESN Wageningen and enjoy all the things we have to offer! With the membership comes the [ESNcard](#) and all of its [discounts](#). You are also able to join the [Buddy Program](#), where two mentors will welcome new arriving students and help them getting around in Wageningen.

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.

Last but not least, at the office we [rent bikes](#) for a very small price, so you and your visiting friends can visit awesome places.

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 Services Center

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 most 2nd and 3rd year 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 programs:

- 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 periods 1, 2, 5 and 6 you can take a total of 12 ECTS credits. In period 3 and 4, you can take a 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, taking two classes per period. Students studying in the Spring can choose to take classes either during periods 3, 4, and 5 **OR** 4, 5, and 6. Some students choose to do periods 3, 4, and 5 because they align closely with the dates of the UW-Madison spring semester - but please note that the orientation takes place prior to period 4, so students beginning in period 3 will not have orientation until after that period. For that reason, it is recommended that students do periods 4, 5, and 6.

Exams will be taken within the period the course is taught. If a student does not pass their exam, there is a re-examination period, but it takes place much later than the regular semester. Therefore, it may be that a student needs to arrange with Testing Services here at the UW to complete a Wageningen re-examination remotely here on UW-Madison's campus after returning from abroad.

Please refer above to the "Program Dates" section as well as to the calendar below for academic calendar information.

Calendar Academic Year 2023-2024



Period	Summer Holidays	PERIOD 1										PERIOD 2					Exams	
		34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48		49
Monday	21-8	28-8	4-9	11-9	18-9	25-9	2-10	9-10	16-10	23-10	30-10	6-11	13-11	20-11	27-11	4-12	11-12	18-12
Tuesday	22-8	29-8	5-9	12-9	19-9	26-9	3-10	10-10	17-10	24-10	31-10	7-11	14-11	21-11	28-11	5-12	12-12	19-12
Wednesday	23-8	30-8	6-9	13-9	20-9	27-9	4-10	11-10	18-10	25-10	1-11	8-11	15-11	22-11	29-11	6-12	13-12	20-12
Thursday	24-8	31-8	7-9	14-9	21-9	28-9	5-10	12-10	19-10	26-10	2-11	9-11	16-11	23-11	30-11	7-12	14-12	21-12
Friday	25-8	1-9	8-9	15-9	22-9	29-9	6-10	13-10	20-10	27-10	3-11	10-11	17-11	24-11	1-12	8-12	15-12	22-12

4-9 Start Academic Year 2023-2024

Period	Christmas Holidays	PERIOD 3					PERIOD 4				PERIOD 5					Exams		
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14		15	16
Monday	25-12	1-1	8-1	15-1	22-1	29-1	5-2	12-2	19-2	26-2	4-3	11-3	18-3	25-3	1-4	8-4	15-4	22-4
Tuesday	26-12	2-1	9-1	16-1	23-1	30-1	6-2	13-2	20-2	27-2	5-3	12-3	19-3	26-3	2-4	9-4	16-4	23-4
Wednesday	27-12	3-1	10-1	17-1	24-1	31-1	7-2	14-2	21-2	28-2	6-3	13-3	20-3	27-3	3-4	10-4	17-4	24-4
Thursday	28-12	4-1	11-1	18-1	25-1	1-2	8-2	15-2	22-2	29-2	7-3	14-3	21-3	28-3	4-4	11-4	18-4	25-4
Friday	29-12	5-1	12-1	19-1	26-1	2-2	9-2	16-2	23-2	1-3	8-3	15-3	22-3	29-3	5-4	12-4	19-4	26-4

Period	Resit B	PERIOD 6										Summer Holidays					2024-2025		
		19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36
Monday	6-5	13-5	20-5	27-5	3-6	10-6	17-6	24-6	1-7	8-7	15-7	22-7	29-7	5-8	12-8	19-8	26-8	2-9	9-9
Tuesday	7-5	14-5	21-5	28-5	4-6	11-6	18-6	25-6	2-7	9-7	16-7	23-7	30-7	6-8	13-8	20-8	27-8	3-9	10-9
Wednesday	8-5	15-5	22-5	29-5	5-6	12-6	19-6	26-6	3-7	10-7	17-7	24-7	31-7	7-8	14-8	21-8	28-8	4-9	11-9
Thursday	9-5	16-5	23-5	30-5	6-6	13-6	20-6	27-6	4-7	11-7	18-7	25-7	1-8	8-8	15-8	22-8	29-8	5-9	12-9
Friday	10-5	17-5	24-5	31-5	7-6	14-6	21-6	28-6	5-7	12-7	19-7	26-7	2-8	9-8	16-8	23-8	30-8	6-9	13-9

Period 6 Second Half start Tuesday June 11

2-9 Start Academic Year 2024-2025

Exam Days 2023-2024	
Period	Date
Period 1	23 to 27 October 2023
Period 2	18 to 22 December 2023
Period 3	1 or 2 February 2024
Resit A (Period 1+2 *)	7 to 9 February 2024
Period 4	7 or 8 March 2024
Period 5	29 April to 3 May 2024
Resit B (Period 2**+3+4)	(7) 8 and 10 May 2024
Period 6 First Half	7 or 10 June 2024
Period 6 Second Half	4 or 5 July 2024
Period 6	1 to 5 July 2024
Resit C1 (Period 5)	11 or 12 July 2024
Resit C2 (Period 6 ***)	17 to 19 July 2024

Holidays 2023-2024	
Calendar week	Date
52+1	25 December 2023 - January 5 2024
52	25 December 2023
52	26 December 2023
1	1 January 2024
13	29 March 2024
13	31 March 2024
14	1 April 2024
17	27 April 2024
18	5 May 2024
19	9 May 2024
20	19 May 2024
21	20 May 2024
30-35	22 July - August 30 2024

Education Exam / Resit Selfstudy Holidays
Education
Exam / Resit
Selfstudy
Holidays

● Details regard resits will be published in the Study Handbook
● Individual courses may deviate from the general set-up

*** Course code start with nr 1 or 2
** Course code start with nr 3, 4, 5 or 6
*** Exceptions possible for courses which can't be graded within 5 days. Exam day 25 or 26 July

Please visit Wageningen's webpage for academic calendar, holiday, and exam registration dates: <http://www.wageningenur.nl/en/Education-Programmes/Current-Students/Agenda-Calendar-Academic-Year.htm>.

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. If you do not pass an exam the first time around, re-examinations are given at a later date (see academic calendar). 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://wur.osiris-student.nl/#/onderwijscatalogus/extern/start> (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. These courses are free of charge for registered Wageningen students.

Registration

You will receive detailed instructions from WUR about how to register for courses. 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. 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) for each class you plan to take in the "Academics" section of your MyStudyAbroad portal.

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 semester = 24-30 ECTS credit

1 full academic year = 48-60 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.

Caution 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

ECTS Credits	UW Madison Credits
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>Wageningen</u>	<u>University of Wisconsin-Madison</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
0.0 - 4.9	F

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.

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.

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 small city (~40,000 inhabitants), many of whom are students at Wageningen University who represent over 150 different countries. It is centrally located in the Netherlands in the province of Gelderland and it is often described as small and cozy, but is only an hour away from the much larger city of Amsterdam. Wageningen is surrounded by nature and has historic and modern buildings, high-rise student flats, works of art and botanical gardens. Wageningen has a thriving cultural and social life. Students can visit theatres, cinemas, student clubs, bars, night life and restaurants. The nearby floodplains of the river Rhine and national park 'de Veluwe' are ideal for those who enjoy nature or like hiking, running or cycling.

It is famous for Wageningen University, which specializes in life sciences and has close to 14,000 students. The campus of Wageningen University & Research is within cycling distance. 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

There is a shortage of housing in the city of Wageningen and housing is not guaranteed through the university. Students are able to apply for on campus housing through [Idealis](#) and private housing by registering for a room via www.room.nl.

For the most up to date information on the housing application process, communicate with your WUR Exchange Coordinator and visit WUR's Housing webpage: <https://www.wur.nl/en/Education-Programmes/future-students/Student-Housing-1.htm>.

Private accommodations vary between small apartments and larger complexes. 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. Read the housing description carefully and inquire with any questions.

Some student housing is in close proximity to campus so students can walk to and from the university, but biking is the best way to get around campus and the city.

University Facilities

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 annual fee. Check out facilities, classes, and sports organizations here: <https://www.wur.nl/en/show/Sport-facilities.htm>.

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. 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

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.

Meal Options

At most student flats or houses, students take turns preparing group dinners and share the grocery costs. There are several supermarkets, specialized food shops, and open air markets near the university where you can buy food. At grocery stores in the NL, you either bring your own canvas bags or they will charge you to use their bags.

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.

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.

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

Student organizations you could join while studying at Wageningen: <https://www.wur.nl/en/Education-Programmes/Current-Students/Extracurriculair-activities/Study-and-student-associations-1.htm>.

Other extracurricular activities to explore: <https://www.wur.nl/en/Education-Programmes/Current-Students/Extracurriculair-activities.htm>

Transportation

Find information about how to get around Wageningen here: <https://www.wur.nl/en/International-staff/Getting-around.htm>. This webpage has links to information about:

- Bicycles
- Dutch traffic, basic traffic rules
- Public transportation
- Pedestrians
- Car/Driving license

Public Transportation

9292.nl is a website that is like a 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.

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.

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. A very handy website to plan out trips is www.9292.nl.

Bicycle

Student housing is relatively close to campus and can easily be reached by bicycle. You may consider purchasing a used bike during your study at Wageningen University through a Facebook group, at the market on Saturdays, or at a bike shop. 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! There are a number of bicycle shops in Wageningen as well as student Facebook groups for buying/selling bikes. Find more information here: <https://www.wur.nl/en/International-staff/Getting-around.htm>.

Flying

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.

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

If you are a student at Wageningen University & Research and are in an emergency, there are several options to get in contact: <https://www.wur.nl/en/Education-Programmes/Current-Students/What-to-do-in-an-emergency-2.htm>.

Phone 112 (the Dutch version of 911) for life-threatening emergencies. Please note that this number is for life-threatening emergencies only. Inappropriate use of this number will result in a considerable fine.

Non-life threatening emergencies

In case of a non-life threatening medical emergency, call your own doctor or the emergency number of GP Van der Duin & Van Dinter:

- 0317-413734 (between 08.00 – 17.00 hrs)
- 0318 434444 (during the weekend and between 17.00 – 08.00 hrs, only use this number for medical problems which cannot wait until the next day).

Other non-life threatening emergency numbers:

- Police: 0900 8844
- Fire Brigade: 0317 412237
- Dentist: 0318 434343
- Pharmacy: 0318 437990

Communication

Apps

Generally, it will be cheapest and easiest to communicate with friends in the NL and family back home using a communications app such as WhatsApp, Skype, Google Hangouts, etc. When making calls, keep in mind time zone differences.

Cell Phones

You can purchase prepaid phone plans, so you can add money/minutes to your phone as you use it. 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 purchase an international data plan.

Internet

As previously mentioned, internet is available to students on campus. 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

The official postal service is PostNL. Please visit their website to find out about postal services and hours: <https://www.postnl.nl/en/about-postnl/about-us/our-organisation/mail-in-the-netherlands/>. Note that post offices in the Netherlands may offer more services than just postal services such as money exchange, banking, etc.

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 the U.S. 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.

Additional Resources

Relevant Websites

U.S. State Department:

<http://travel.state.gov>

Center for Disease Control

<http://www.cdc.gov/travel/>

Current exchange rates

<http://www.oanda.com>

Travel Guides & Books About the Netherlands

Learn as much as you can about the Netherlands before you leave. While the internet has a lot of information, investing in a physical book/travel guide is helpful for providing background information on the Netherlands' history, geography, politics, and culture as well as providing a dependable reference with everything in a single place, especially if you travel without consistent access to internet. Reading novels and other literature by Dutch authors can also provide a glimpse into Dutch history, landscape, and way of life. Lonely Planet, Fodor's, Rough Guides, Frommers offer great guides geared towards younger travelers with smaller budgets.

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](#).

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.

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.

Life Abroad

"Opposed to other study abroad programs, this one is unique in that your classmates are mostly Dutch and European International Students. Having this cultural diversity allowed me to genuinely see what other cultures are like. Academically, Wageningen is world-renown, so it is a good quality education. Even though the classes may seem intimidating, Dutch culture (emphasizing the importance of self-care and the separation between work, school, and individual time) decreases the workload that may be affiliated with school (this was a shocking difference between American vs. Dutch schooling systems), so you will have plenty of time for travelling and spending time with friends."

"Quiet town, nice people, true Dutch culture (ie. not Amsterdam). Extremely high quality academics. Understanding staff and faculty."

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

"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."

"The Dutch are very exclusive. You will need to try and make an effort if you want Dutch friends, not just international student friends."

"While Wageningen has a large international student presence, many student associations or social events are not fully inclusive of international students. I believe this may be due to the language barrier as well as often the short exchanges they are on. Do not let this discourage you, however! You will make friends with many international students, and it will be the best time of your life."

Academics

"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."

“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.”

“I loved receiving an education from professors with a worldly experience, as it opened up my perspective to future jobs or the educational path towards achieving a master's degree. I hope to now enroll in a Master program in the Netherlands! Now that I am aware of the vastly different world that exists outside of America, I hope to find a career and living situation that will allow me to continue to travel and expand my worldly perspective on issues.”

“I want to study outside of the U.S. for my Master's program now. I don't have nearly as many reservations about leaving my home. I can communicate cross-culturally better and more easily connect and empathize with international students at UW-Madison. “

Housing

“The advantage is price and convenience; the disadvantage is it takes lots of works to find the room to live and requires [that you] register on the website in advance.”

“...ways to acquire housing such as the Housing Facebook group that many students use to sublet their rooms. In addition, do not panic if you do not find housing right away. When putting in your preferences, it will save you time, money and stress, if you look for only furnished rooms. Idealis advertises many unfurnished rooms and you may feel pressures to put in your preference for the first housing offer that come up. If at all possible, try to avoid unfurnished rooms as it is an extra hassle acquiring furniture. Because we have priority, you WILL be able to find housing using Idealis. Ask if a router is included in the wifi package. They are mostly* not so expect to buy one as one of the first things you do. Lastly, if you are looking to make friends with your neighbors, try not to get a self-contained room in Campus Plaza or Bornsesteeg. These rooms do not have a shared kitchen (meaning you will have to buy a hot plate and microwave etc) and limited communal spaces with your corridor mates.”

“Furnished room is the best choice for a short-term exchange program. Choose places close to the campus.”

“Live in Dijkgraaf dorm building. It is far superior to the other options.”

Financial

“Get a Dutch bank account - it'll make your life a whole lot easier!”

Safety

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

“... I felt safer walking home at night as a woman.”