

STUDENT SURVEY

Please send this survey to Veronika Eberl at the **BOKU International Relations** (e-mail: kuwi@boku.ac.at) **within two months** of the end of the study abroad period. The letter of acknowledgement from the host institution should also be turned in to BOKU-IR (Peter Jordan Straße 82A, 1190 Wien). If all forms are not handed in (including this one), it is possible that the entire sum of the scholarship must be re-paid by the recipient to KUWI (see the agreement).

BASIC INFORMATION

1. Name of student: anonymous

Field of study: **Forestry**
 Host Institution: **UBC**
 Host country/city: **Vancouver**
 Study Abroad Period: from **01.01.2022** until **31.04.2022**

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE STUDENTS

2. Information about the research offerings at the host institution:

How helpful were the following informational resources?

(1 = not helpful to 5 = very helpful)

- BOKU- International Relations
- Lecturers at BOKU
- Degree course schemes
- Students / friends
- Host institution
- Host institution's web homepages

Other:

3. How would you rank your knowledge of the language spoken at your host institution?

(1 = little to 5 = excellent)

	Vor dem Aufenthalt im Ausland					Nach dem Aufenthalt im Ausland				
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Reading comprehension	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Listening comprehension	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Speaking ability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Writing Ability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

4. Languages most often used at the host institution, in percent:

Used language German: Ja Nein

1.English	100%	2.
3.		4.

Which recommendations/tips would you give to future students about the host country and host institution?

(Please give any recommendations, information resources, contacts and links)

5. Host country

Prepare well in advance before visiting especially in relation to renting a place and applying for study permit. Vancouver is extremely expensive so having some savings above what is required for the study permit is crucial.

The renting market is extremely aggressive and volatile. Do not rely on the University accommodation only. Use the external sites that are recommended in the University website, as these are excellent links to external accommodation sites that are safe. If you like a place, be prepared to give a deposit immediately as you may lose the chance to find a room. Watch out for scams as many get scammed. Try to use a disposable online visa such as the one offered through Revolut which operates internationally and has almost no charges on transactions. Before sending money, have a zoom call with the landlord and see the place.

Vancouver is known for its outdoor activities and all the beautiful places. Be prepared for both summer and winter adventures and if you already have light-weight mountain gear I suggest you bring it with you as buying gear here might be expensive.

The weather gets excessively cold only for a few weeks but the amount of rain cannot be underestimated. I recommend that every student should have at least one pair of waterproof boots and waterproof jacket. Water-resistant clothing is not enough.

Volunteer whenever possible. You may use this site <https://ca.indeed.com/jobs-in-Vancouver,BC?vjk=00164862e9a46065> for both paid and unpaid jobs but if you can gain experience through volunteering, it is considered a great asset in your resume especially if you will be applying for some form of research with a UBC supervisor.

6. Host institution

Once here, there are many opportunities to get to know people especially through student clubs. My favourite is the VOC (Varsity Outdoor Club) <https://www.ubc-voc.com/tripagenda/upcoming.php> becoming a member is very cheap and they provide amazing experiences for both beginners and advanced sports activities. If you start your semester in September make sure to join the club trips immediately since in Vancouver the weather dictates a lot what can or cannot be done. Most trips are concentrated in September and October, however winter sport is big here.

Start approaching the UBC Professors on research topics immediately as soon as you settle down. Many Professors are extremely busy and may have multiple projects going on. Do some background research on the Professor you wish to be supervised by and check if they have their own company. If they do check their website and how they usually take in students. Most Professors supervise very few students per year, some only one or two, so make sure you give a good impression about your knowledge. Also, check the online library for their published work and make sure you understand their area of study. Ideally, you approach a Professor who is teaching you in the first semester so that you can give them the opportunity to know your work and work ethics. Try to apply for Teaching Assistant if you are allowed and enhance your networking through Forestry events.

Also, try to register for courses which are field-work oriented as this will give you a great opportunity to get close to fellow students and make friends. Overall just have fun and enjoy the process!

7. To which degree did you feel socially integrated??

(1 = not at all to 5 = very good)

	1	2	3	4	5
Local culture/ society overall	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
With students from the host institution	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
With other foreign students at the host institution	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

8. With help from which contact person (at BOKU/ at the host institution) did you organize your stay?

Mostly [redacted] and [redacted] from the host University UBC and [redacted] from BOKU.

9. To which degree would you rate the support you were thereby given (before and after your stay)?

(1 = low to 5 = high)

4	BOKU- International Relations
4	Lecturers at BOKU
5	Host institution
3	Students from the host institution
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other:

10. Application forms, financial support, other needs

I received a lot of support on all these areas and different needs. The financial support is extremely crucial as it is a very expensive province and prices for everything especially accomodation and flights keep going up.

The contact persons were easy to talk to and very customer oriented which I really enjoyed. One area which I think could improve is the availability of BOKU meetings at times which are favourable for the time difference in BC. Due to COVID there are still restrcited hours and it would be easier if BOKU gave more availabilities for students being hosted abroad. In addition, the host university has more people in the administration to support the students, while in BOKU most international relatons work falls on the same few people. UBC has administation resources dedicated to each section which helps a lot with having more support. Having said that, both administrations do everything they can to support the students.

11. Please give tips and helpful suggestions in reference to your host country/ host institution regarding society (cultural differences, importance of command of language, etc.):

The first thing that you should know is that Canada is established on the unceded territory of First Nations (meaning the land was never legally ceded, or given up through a treaty or other agreement). This is important not only for how you approach things in general but especially since Forestry in particular, is a vital resource for First Nations (if this is your area of study). In everything you do (even academically), you have to be mindful and respectful of this.

If you know English that will be enough everywhere. French is the second language but many still do not speak it. Do not worry if you have a thick accent from your mother tongue. Most people do not discriminate based on language, nationality etc.

Overall be very mindful and respectful of different ideologies, religions, cultures, gender and sexual issues. There are controversial issues that are openly discussed in Europe

that are completely taboo here. If you are not familiar with the politics behind some of the common issues then I suggest you use youtube to educate yourself on the current issues around several contemporary topics, as this may also influence your perceived performance in class.

Local people take time to build friendships. You might have to be the one to host a few events before a group starts picking up. To be assertive and outgoing is a must otherwise you will probably not integrate easily.

12. During your stay abroad, were special events organized specifically for exchange students?

Yes No

If yes, please include descriptions: Some events include, Friday drinks, hikes, halloween parties, christmas dinner, competitions, picnic at the beach.

ACCOMODATION, SERVICES AND EXPENCES

13. Where did you actually live during your stay abroad?

Student dormitory Hotel / boarding house / guest house Room in a private apartment
 Private apartment Shared apartment with other students

14. Who helped you find living accommodation?

Host institution Friends/family
 Broker Other: Websites linked to University site and recommended by friends

15. What quality of support did the host institution give in the search for accommodation?

(1 = bad to 5 = excellent)

1 2 3 4 5

16. How would you rank the accommodation?

(1 = bad to 5 = excellent)

1 2 3 4 5

17. To which extent were student resources available to you? (libraries, computer labs, laboratories, facilities, etc.)?

(1 = not at all bis 5 = very good)

1 2 3 4 5

18. How was the computer and internet access?

(1 = bad bis 5 = very good)

1 2 3 4 5

19. Monthly expenditure during the course of the stay abroad (in Euros):

Travel expenses (for one way there and back): 1,304

Monthly expenditure (incl. accommodation): 1,347 spent on:

627	Accommodation
454	Maintenance
75	Commuting expenses
40	Costs of books, copy, etc.
0	Tuition
151	Other

OVERALL ASSESSMENT

20. Evaluate your stay in an academic sense:

(1 = bad to 5 = excellent)

1 2 3 4 5

21. Evaluate your stay in a personal sense:

(1 = bad to 5 = excellent)

1 2 3 4 5

22. Which aspects of your study abroad stay did you most enjoy?

In an academic sense:

Going on Field trips and in-class discussions and doing research with one of my Professors

In a socio-cultural sense:

Hiking and camping with VOC

23. Did you have any problems during this study abroad stay?

Nothing

24. Did the fact that you studied abroad cause you to have to study at BOKU longer?

Yes No I don't no

If so, why?

25. In your opinion, how can the KUWI scholarship program improve upon itself?

I am happy with how flexible and efficient this scholarship is.

Publication of this report

I agree that this report, including the above data (field of study, host university, year of study, length of stay), will be published on the website of BOKU- International Relations for the purpose of exchanging information on the study visit, so that future interested outgoings can be informed about your experience at the host institution.

The consent is voluntary and can be withdrawn at any time in the future without giving reasons. Any revocation can be declared at any time by e-mail to kuwi@boku.ac.at.

Yes No

Research Report

(Brief report of stay abroad from scientific point of view, ca. 1 page)

Objective of the Research

To identify the effects of Nitrogen fertilization on arbuscular mycorrhiza (AM) associated with Western Red Cedar and to identify the effects of Nitrogen fertilization on belowground ecology.

Background

Western Red Cedar has great commercial and cultural value in British Columbia, and especially in Haida Gwaii. One of the major environmental threats to the natural regeneration of this tree is the over-browsing from the Sitka black-tailed deer, *Odocoileus hemionus sitkensis* (Stroh, 2008). This deer is thought to have been introduced intentionally to the islands of Haida Gwaii in the 1800's, however, with limited natural predators and low competition, its population has become dense (Stockton, 2004). The overpopulation of herbivores means that there is an increasing pressure on the local vegetation. Furthermore, in comparison to adjacent territories, Haida Gwaii have less vascular plant species on which the deers graze (Stockton, 2004), making the Red Cedar saplings more prone to being over-browsed. The fertilization of Red Cedar stands could potentially push the growth of the saplings beyond browsing height and hence increasing the success rate of the stand (Grayston, 2021). In addition, in line with BC's climate change strategy, localized fertilization could help in the offset of atmospheric carbon by increasing carbon sequestration.

Site

The research was conducted on Graham Island in Haida Gwaii, which are an archipelago of islands in the Pacific, adjacent to the Alaskan territory. The sites are located on the CANOEIF (53° 34' 26" N/132° 13' 20" W) and FLOIF (53° 33' 53" N/132° 14' 00" W) forest blocks, located on the Florence forest service road, south of Port Clements (Grayston, 2021).

Source: http://www.ourbc.com/bc_maps/haida_gwaii/bc_maps_haida_gwaii.htm



Methodology

Three different stands were selected for this study from a total of six plots that were undergoing previous research. The first parts of the research were initiated in March 2020 and re-commenced in March 2021, after the pandemic, whereby a replicated paired-tree fertilization trial was conducted on the plots. To do this, trees from the plot with similar characteristics and growing in similar conditions were paired. One of the paired trees was fertilized using UREA and one was kept as control. My part of the study was conducted in 2022, a year after Nitrogen fertilization. After collecting the DBH of the treated and non-treated trees, the trees that showed an increase in DBH between the fertilized tree and its non-fertilized counterpart were selected for sampling. A total of 18 trees were selected, from which three samples of fine roots and three samples of soil were collected with a total of 108 samples. The samples were prepared on-site and kept at constant temperatures of -20°C throughout the stay in Haida Gwaii and during the travel back to UBC. The DNA extraction and PCR of both the soil and the AM from the fine roots were conducted in the labs at UBC. Preliminary tests show positive results of DNA present in both soil and root samples. All samples were sent to external laboratories and are awaiting results.

References:

Stockton SA. The effect of introduced Sitka black-tailed deer, *Odocoileus hemionus sitkensis* Merriam, on the forest understorey plant communities of Haida Gwaii, British Columbia: pattern, process, and recovery (Doctoral dissertation, University of Ottawa (Canada)).

Stroh N, Baltzinger C, Martin JL. Deer prevent western redcedar (*Thuja plicata*) regeneration in old-growth forests of Haida Gwaii: Is there a potential for recovery?. *Forest Ecology and Management*. 2008 Jun 30;255(12):3973-9.

Grayston S. Evaluation of fertilization to accelerate western red cedar growth, enhance soil carbon stocks, and decrease greenhouse gas emissions on Haida Gwaii. 2021 Internal Document, The University of British Columbia.

Thank you for your help!