

Victoria Abroad Evaluation Form

PLEASE TYPE THIS EVALUATION FORM & EMAIL IT TO VICTORIA ABROAD AS A WORD DOCUMENT

A: Student Information

VUW degree(s)	LLB/BA (Only law on exchange)
Major(s)	Law and Criminology
Exchange Institution	City University of Hong Kong
VUW Tri & Year of Exchange	2016 - Trimester 2

B: Finances

Please detail your basic costs in New Zealand dollars. This will help future students plan their own budgets. (Enter your number rounded to the nearest dollar.)

Books	\$290 (some courses do not have any books - most law courses have textbooks, they are available in the library so it is up to you if you buy it or not - 3 of my courses had textbooks)
Accommodation	1180 (whole semester in student residence) - about 73 dollars a week. Very cheap! Off campus is MUCH more expensive
Return Airfare	\$1350
Local Transportation	\$15 a week
Meals	If you eat at the student canteen about \$5 per meal, eating out is more expensive - or you could cook for yourself.
Visa	\$100
Health & Insurance	\$350 (this was for insurance until end of January - so an extra month - the university provides an optional insurance but it is less comprehensive)
Personal Spending	It depends what you want to do! I probably spent at least \$50 a week on extra stuff to enjoy my time!
Communications (phone, etc.)	\$17 a month unlimited data
Other fees (specify)	Buying bedding - \$60

What unexpected costs did you encounter? What items were more or less than expected?

Coffee is outrageously expensive - in some places \$8 NZD. Food when you do not eat at the canteen is very expensive (trust me you will not want to eat there for the whole semester). The MTR train is 50% off for students so transport was pretty cheap

How did your financial expenses compare to what you originally expected to spend?

- I probably spent more - but that was mainly on travel, food and coffee. So if you do not indulge in these luxuries then your budget will be fine. The CityU budget is really helpful (http://www.cityu.edu.hk/gso/ies_costlivenfin.htm)

By what means did you maintain your finances? What would you recommend? (Credit card, foreign bank account, travelers checks, etc)?

- I would recommend getting a credit card and just taking out cash at the atm fortnightly. They do not suggest getting a bank account for one semester. If you go for a year then open a bank account in HK!

What financial advice would you give students attending the same university as you?

- Have extra money to enjoy food and travel!

What was the average cost of a can of coke or coffee in your host country?

- Coffee how we have it in NZ would be \$8, coffee from the canteen is only about \$1 but is not very nice. Coke \$1.50

C: Visas & Insurance **Please note this information is recommended by VUW students & current at the time of their exchange. For all up-to-date visa information you must check with the embassy/consulate of your host university.*

Did you have to apply for a visa? If so, was it difficult? What was the process, how long did it take and how much did it cost?

- The visa process itself is not very difficult. You fill out a form, send it to the university and they act as your sponsor. You pay about 100 dollars. What is stressful is that the visa is pretty late. I got mine 4 days before I left on exchange. However; it is not a big deal if it does not arrive on time because you can pick it up at the university (you just enter HK on a tourist visa) then the first weekend most of the exchange students go to Macau, then you just enter HK on the student visa! Easy!

Do you have any advice for future students when applying for visas to your host country?

- Apply as early as you can. Contact the university if you have not received it close to the time you are going to leave.

Did your host university have a mandatory insurance? Or a particular insurance they recommended? If Yes, what was it and how much did it cost?

- They had an insurance policy that was optional, they recommended getting your own insurance but you could get the uni insurance if you wanted. You HAD to have some kind of insurance.

What insurance company did you use and would you recommend it to future students?

- I used Southern Cross TravelCare - it was good. Kind of pricey but I liked that I did not have to specify the countries I would visit.

D: Academics at Host University

Which courses did you take while on exchange? Please rate the difficulty of each course (1-5, 1 = Very Easy & 5 = Extremely Difficult) and leave any comments you may have.

Course Title	Language of Instruction	VUW course equivalent or elective	VUW points/credits value	Rating (1-5)	Comments
VUW Trimester 1/YEAR					
VUW Trimester 2/YEAR					
Law and Gender	English	Law Elective	15	2	Great course! Very interesting, lots of class discussion.
Banking Law	English	Law Elective	15	3	Okay course, had a quiz which was mainly memorisation which was hard, but rest of course straight forward

Introduction to Hong Kong Legal System	English	Law Elective	15	2	I took this course thinking that it would be cool to learn about HK. Would not really recommend taking it as you mainly learn about basic introductory law such as differences between CL and civil law etc. But pretty easy if you want a light course and learn a little about HK system.
Intellectual Property	English	Law Elective	15	2	Good course! We got to do group presentations which was fun!

Course Registration/Enrolment

Please describe the registration process at your host university. What kind of help was available?

-It is pretty easy as an exchange student as your courses are pre-registered for you. Some of the courses may not end up being available though so apply for more. You can also change courses in HK, e.g. I swapped a course, which was pretty straight forward.

How successful were you in registering/enrolling for classes you wanted? What advice would you offer to next year's exchange students about registration at your host university?

- Pre-enrol for more courses than you want, you can drop or change later on.

Do you have any advice for future students when choosing and applying for courses?

- There are lots of interesting general education or language courses, if you don't have to take certain courses to graduate then look into these!

Academic Experience

How did your academic experience differ from your time spend at Victoria? Did the academic experience meet your expectations?

- I didn't really know what to expect, but each of my courses was different! Overall, it was easier than at home but some things were different. For example there is lots of group work, participation marks and

presentations. I've never done these at home so it was a good experience. One of my lecturers was amazing and had to adjust some of our class times because he was part of the UN and had to go to Geneva (pretty cool getting taught by someone part of the UN).

How did the style of teaching at your host university compare with that at VUW? How did the workload compare to what you would expect at VUW?

- I loved two courses and the style of teaching they had. However; one of my courses was very much lecture at you (but that can happen at VUW too ;)). One of my courses was very basic and aimed at first years, as I was a fifth year this was pretty dry. The workload was slightly more than VUW but easier (this just applies to law courses - because normally at VUW we just have test, exam or essay, exam; whereas in my courses I had assignment, presentation, group work, participation, exam).

What would you recommend as an appropriate course load for other VUW students visiting your partner university? What specific courses would you recommend to visiting VUW students? Why?

- I did 4 courses, this was great and I had lots of spare time! Most other exchange students are actually required by their home university to do 5 courses, but we only have to do 4 :) I would recommend 4 courses. Law and gender was an awesome course, you don't have to be a law student! Also introductory mandarin is a cool thing to do!

What advice would you give VUW students about succeeding academically at your host university?

- Make sure that you do well on internal work like presentations, assignments, they mark easier than exams. Also make sure you start group projects early.

What was your impression of the computer facilities, library, and internet access at your host university?

- Everything was pretty good, although there are not that many printers, always print in AC2 at the start of the semester.

If you went to a country where English is not the native language, how did you prepare for this? Were there any intensive language courses provided by the host university?

- In HK they speak Cantonese, most people speak english (not everyone!). The university offers a survival cantonese class, take it, it is fun! You can also download some apps e.g. ones for taxi cards of addresses. In most places you will be fine with english, and if not then it is all part of the experience.

E: Accommodation

What form of accommodation did you stay in?

- Student Residence, double room

What were the pros and cons of this form of accommodation?

- Cheap, on campus

What accommodation would you recommend to future students?

- Student Residence

How early can you move into accommodation?

- The first day of the orientation week

What options were available for meal plans or cooking facilities? How satisfied were you with the food?

- In the Student Residence you have access to a hot plate, or there is one oven in each hall. There are plenty of canteens around campus, and the mall is close by. I preferred to eat out.

If you lived in off-campus housing, how easy was it to find? What should future VUW exchange students know about living off-campus?

- I didn't stay in off-campus BUT some friends did, it is pretty expensive. There are some options such as apple dorm, CampusHK which are alternative student residence accommodations. It is hard to find off-campus accommodation.

Do you have any tips of advice for future students when applying for accommodation?

- Apply for student residence the second it opens! VERY IMPORTANT!

F: Personal & Cultural Connections

What was it like making friends? How successful were you at making friends with local (i.e., not international) students?

- Most of my friends were other exchange students. It is pretty hard to make local friends. I made some but that was only because of being in the student residence.

What was it like to adjust to the culture of your exchange country/university?

- I found it pretty easy, but I loved HK and the fast paced life style! Some others struggled as sometimes people are quite rude and everything is very fast!!

What, if any, cultural differences did you find particularly challenging? How would you recommend students to prepare for these differences?

- You need to keep an open mind! Everything is very fast and efficient and personal space is very different. Make sure you keep to the right on escalators and do not get in people's way.

What parts of the culture did you most appreciate?

- There were some really cool festivals! Like the mid-autumn festival, it was great, my floor mates helped me make mooncakes.

How were you treated by local people? By university staff and faculty? By students?

- Sometimes you get stared at if in areas with poorer people, but you get used to it. Local people will only help you if you ask for it. The university staff and faculty were good, the business faculty arranged heaps of activities! There are about 600-700 exchange students in Semester A, so local students are very used to exchange students! Some will be interested in where you come from, others will not.

As far as you could tell, how easy would it be for students with disabilities to study at your partner university? For students who are visible minorities in your host country? For students who are gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgendered?

- I think the university is okay for people with disabilities, has elevators etc, and student support centres
- HK is a very diverse place, so there are people from all over! Everyone looks different.
- For the most part young people are fine with LGBTIQ*, may be some discrimination from older people but that also happens in NZ!

Did you face any issues regarding discrimination in your host country? What were they, and what advice would you give to future students?

- Not really, apart from tourist pricing in markets (learn to barter)

G: Extra-curricular/Social Activities

What organized activities (clubs, sports, etc.) were available to students? What extra-curricular activities would you recommend to future exchange students?

- Some people join the uni teams e.g. swimming, football

What do you recommend other visiting students see or do on their weekends or holidays?

- See as much of HK as you can but also travel to new places! You can go to so many places and flights are way cheaper than in NZ.

What opportunities were there for students to work on-campus? Off-campus?

- You cannot legally work if you are just there for one semester
- If you are there for a full year tutoring english pays well

What volunteer or internship opportunities were there for students?

- There is the City Youth Empowerment Project
- You can volunteer to be an english mentor for ELMS
- Not too sure about internships

5 things to take to your host country or region

1	A UK converter plug - and if you are in student residence and have a wireless modem lying around at home then bring it with you, there is no wifi in the rooms (just plug in but you can use a modem)
2	Go to a travel doctor and get medicines for travelling e.g. anti nausea, tummy pills etc (good if you travel elsewhere). Also if you are a girl then bring your own contraception, and tampons (you can only buy 1 brand of tampons in HK)
3	
4	
5	

5 pieces of useful advice would tell a VUW student going to your host university

1	Get an octopus card as soon as you can (used for MTR, buying things)
2	On a Monday go to Billy Boozers near campus, and also go to Mr Wongs, all you can eat and all you can drink.
3	Make sure that you keep to the right on escalators - and when going out the doors towards Festival Walk make sure you go through the middle doors (this is a tradition that means you will do well in your exams haha)
4	There are really nice desks to sit at outside (with plugs etc) they are by the pond
5	Cafe De France does the best coffee on campus (although it is a little bit more expensive) - there is also a Cafe De France outside which is really nice

Top 5 Things to do

What are your 'Top 5 Things To Do' future VUW students at your host university or city/country?

1	Hiking - Dragons Back Hike, Lion Rock, Lantau Island and cliff jumping at Sai Kung
2	Try Hot Pot, Dim Sum (go to Tim Ho Wan), little bao, egg waffles, egg tarts and eat at Australian Dairy Company (best scrambled eggs I have ever had)
3	Visit Lantau Island; take the cable car, see the Big Buddha, walk the wisdom path, eat at the vegetarian restaurant and go to the Tai O fishing village
4	Visit Victoria Peak and watch the sunset!
5	Head to the top of the IFC with your new friends and look out over the beauty of Victoria Harbour, then head into LKF and party the night away!

H: Personal Experience

Please write one paragraph about your exchange experience. Plus, don't forget to submit some photos to the exchange office!!

Studying at City University of Hong Kong offers limitless opportunities. The university gives you a unique global experience, where you are able to meet locals, full-time international students and other exchangers from all over the world. I truly value all the friendships that I made and how much I have learned about myself from my exchange. When you live in Hong Kong, one-minute you can be eating local dim sum in Mong Kok (the most densely populated suburb in the world) and the next, you can escape the concrete jungle by hiking the dragons back or cliff-jumping into waterfalls. Hong Kong also acts as the perfect gateway for further travel around Asia. The six months that I spent on exchange and travelling are the best experiences of my life so far. Whilst on exchange in Hong Kong I visited Macau, China, Japan and Vietnam. After my exchange I visited Bali, Malaysia and spent a month in Thailand. Hong Kong is my favourite place in the world and I am so glad that I chose CityU as my exchange destination!