

Victoria Abroad Evaluation Form

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

A: Student Information

VUW degree(s)	BCom/BA Conjoint
Major(s)	Economics, Politics
Exchange Institution	Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile
VUW Tri & Year of Exchange	Tri 1 and 2, 2016

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	0
Accommodation	\$130 a week, around \$5000 for the year
Return Airfare	\$2000
Local Transportation	\$10 a week
Meals	\$50 a week
Visa	\$400 NZD
Health & Insurance	\$800
Personal Spending	\$4000
Communications (phone, etc.)	\$20 a month
Other fees (specify)	
What unexpected costs did you encounter? What items were more or less than expected?	Food is roughly the same price as back in New Zealand but everything else is much cheaper. Accommodation will nearly always include wifi and electricity so no need to worry about those.

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

I spent pretty much what I had budgeted for. My personal spending was quite high due to travelling all around the continent and throughout Chile in the trimester breaks.

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

Westpac has a partnership with Scotiabank which means if you withdraw money at the ATM there's no extra fees only a flat 2.5% foreign currency fee. I found this the most effective method but it is possible to open a Chilean bank account also.

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

Make a weekly budget and try stick to it. Santiago in particular can be quite expensive (compared to the rest of the continent) if you eat and drink out in the nicer areas.

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

Coke= \$1 NZD

Coffee= \$2 NZD

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?

You have two main visa options in Chile. One is to have a 90 day tourist visa which you can renew as many times as you want assuming you leave the country before 90 days and then renew it at the border (I recommend a trip over to Mendoza in this case). This option is probably best if you're there for 1 trimester. The other option is to obtain a student visa, which costs \$400 but lasts for the year. This process takes a while so give yourself time to get it approved before you leave. This option is best if you're there for the year.

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

Be patient and give yourself time, it's Latin America haha.

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?

The university had mandatory health insurance, which you had to show proof of. I bought mine through 1 Cover, STA travel insurance is super expensive and not worth the cost in my opinion.

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

1 Cover, would recommend

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
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VUW Trimester 1/YEAR					
Experiencias Económicas Comparadas: Europa, America Latina y Asia	Spanish		20	3	An economic history paper. No maths involved, fairly interesting
Populismo en América Latina: Teoría y Praxis	Spanish		20	3	Populism in Latin America, taken by a Canadian professor
Seminario de Cultura Chilena	Spanish		20	3	Course for exchange students with topics on Chilean sociology, history, politics and economics. Good course to network and get to know other exchange students
VUW Trimester 2/YEAR					
Análisis Económico y Experiencia Chilena	Spanish		20	3	Difficult course taken by a world renowned professor, one of the original Chicago Boys Rolf Luders. Would recommend but stay on top of the workload
Análisis de Política Exterior en Países Latinoamericanos	Spanish		20	4	Best course I took at La Católica. Interesting course, great professor

Course Registration/Enrolment

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

You register for your courses in person when you arrive which can be somewhat daunting particularly if your Spanish isn't up to scratch (mine was not). Not to worry though, the staff are super understanding and friendly.

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?

I dropped one of my courses two weeks into second trimester because it was too difficult but by that stage I couldn't pick up another course. Make sure to organize yourself so that you have classes you're happy with.

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

The courses for exchange students are easy and a good chance to meet people if you're looking for some easy papers.

Academic Experience

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

The academic standard at La Católica is definitely higher than that of Vic. That being said, the Humanities faculty in particular is likely to cut you some slack because you're an exchange student.

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?

It's more of a high school classroom teaching environment at PUC. Classes of 20-40 students with more interactive lectures. Workload is pretty similar.

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?

3 courses are enough at PUC, allows you to enjoy the academic experience but also enjoy the culture and allows you to travel. Although it is very possible to take 4 courses also.

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

Introduce yourself to your lecturer where possible so that they know you're an exchange student/ Become friends with people in your course, this will help immensely in situations where you don't understand the

content.

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

Awesome facilities.

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?

The university offers intensive courses before the beginning of classes and normal classes throughout the trimester. I unfortunately arrived too late for the intensive courses but I'd recommend them. Having good Spanish makes things much easier and more enjoyable.

E: Accommodation

What form of accommodation did you stay in?

Student houses with a mixture of Chileans and exchange students

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

Pros- plenty of people to share the experience with, easy to make friends from different universities

Cons- Less authentic than staying with a family

What accommodation would you recommend to future students?

Depends what you like. I stayed in big student houses which I loved. Ideally, you want to be living in a house with Chileans and/or Spanish speakers

How early can you move into accommodation?

As early as you want, times are flexible

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

No real meal plans as there is no university-sponsored accommodation. Cook for yourself as you would in NZ

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

Super easy to find houses. Use Compartadeppto or search up facebook groups, there's always plenty of good accommodation

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

Apply early, visit the houses. I recommend living in the center and not out in Las Condes

F: Personal & Cultural Connections

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

CAUC (the organization for international students at La Católica), is a great way to meet Chileans and foreigners alike. Making friends with Chileans isn't the easiest but the trade-off is that when you make Chilean friends those friendships tend to be strong, such is the nature of Chilean society. Just put yourself out there and be friendly!

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

Initially pretty difficult due to the language barrier but in the end you adjust. The one hour 20 minute scheduled lunch break each day is definitely something I loved!

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

Latin America is different but in the best possible way. Lots of dancing, lots of going out, lots of football. It's pretty much everything you imagine it to be. Listen to Reggaeton before you arrive, it will help! Santiago is a fast city, so be prepared for that. But most of all just embrace it and get amongst! At the beginning I was hesitant to fully embrace the culture, but once I got past that I enjoyed my experience much more.

What parts of the culture did you most appreciate?

The rules are more relaxed, the people like to dance, the chilenismos, the pisco!

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

Treated exceptionally well generally

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?

Not a problem. The students all seemed to be very open minded.

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

No problems.

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?

Football, basketball, hockey, dance classes etc. One of my big regrets is not being involved in a university sports team, it's a great way to meet people!

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

Travel as much as you can handle. Valparaiso on the weekend is always good, a long weekend trip to Mendoza is definitely worth it. You're only in Latin America for a certain amount of time, go out and explore!

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

There is a ton of opportunities to teach English if you're interested and people always pay well, that was the main form of employment.

What volunteer or internship opportunities were there for students?

There's quite a few but they're not always the right fit for International Students. The coordinator will send out a list of them so do your research if you want to get amongst.

5 things to take to your host country or region

1	New Zealand food and treats (pineapple lumps are always good)
2	All Blacks jersey
3	Good pair of trainers for your travels
4	New Zealand gifts to give to special people you meet along the way
5	

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

1	Practice your Spanish before arriving
2	Make an effort to meet and befriend Chileans
3	Take every opportunity to go out (the hangover will be worth the memories)
4	Travel all of Chile and beyond (San Pedro is a must)
5	

Top 5 Things to do

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

1	Local Beverages (Pisco, Terremoto etc)
2	Local Cuisine (Completo save lives on nights out)
3	San Pedro, Torres de Paine, Puerto Varas, Valparaiso, Valle de Elqui
4	Join the Tandem language program- great way to meet Chileans
5	

H: Personal Experience

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

It's somewhat of a cliché, but the experience I had in Chile was the experience of a lifetime. It wasn't always easy and there were definitely ups and downs, particularly with adjusting in the beginning. But through it all you learn so much living and studying in another country, especially one that doesn't speak your language. Meet as many people as you can, because in the end it's always the quality of the people you meet along the way that define how good your experience will be. You won't regret it, and you'll have friends for life from all around the world. Que te vayas súper bien, aprovecha cada momento!