

Victoria Abroad Evaluation Form

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

A: Student Information

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| VUW degree(s) | Bachelor of Architectural Studies, Masters of Architectural Studies |
| Major(s) | Architecture |
| Exchange Institution | University of British Columbia |
| VUW Tri & Year of Exchange | First VUW trimester, 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.)

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| Books | None required for my degree |
| Accommodation | \$3660 |
| Return Airfare | \$1950 |
| Local Transportation | About \$200 (mandatory as part of UBC fees) |
| Meals | \$700-800 |
| Visa | Not required |
| Health & Insurance | \$521 |
| Personal Spending | \$2000 (skiing and trips) |
| Communications (phone, etc.) | \$15-20 per month for very basic service |
| Other fees (specify) | UBC Fees about \$500 (transport and IMED) |
| What unexpected costs did you encounter? What items were more or less than expected? | Phone plans are expensive Food is pretty cheap if you shop and cook for yourself. |

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

Expenses for living were as expected, however spent a lot more on optional activities (skiing, trips)

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

I used a Cash Passport Card. It worked great. It worked like a credit card at all places and withdraw fees for cash (dependent on terminal) were between 2-3 dollars.

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

Budget more money if you plan to take advantage of the extra opportunities like skiing or the exchange trips.

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

Can of coke around \$1-1.50 and coffee \$3-4

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?

No visa required as I studied for less than 6 months

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

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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?

UBC has mandatory health insurance which is included in its fees. It was about \$250 CAD. I got supplementary insurance as this insurance did not cover me for all of my travels.

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

Southern Cross, I had no issues or reason to claim

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 | | | | | |
| ARCH 501 Architectural Design Studio II | English | ARCH 411 – Architecture Design | UBC - 9Crd VUW – 36 pts | 5 | Great design paper, small tutorial groups with very highly trained tutors. My tutor was managing partner of a mid-sized architecture firm. |
| ARCH 505 Architectural History 1B | English | ARCH 451 – Architecture History | UBC - 3Crd VUW - 12 pts | 3 | Very similar to SARC 251. Covers early modernism with emphasis on memorization of dates and facts rather than themes and concepts |

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|--------------------------------|---------|----------|----------------------------|---|--|
| ARCH 517 Design Media II | English | Elective | UBC - 3Crd VUW – 12 pts | 4 | Essentially a course teaching design programs ; Rhino, Rrasshopper, Digital Hand and other digital tools like CNC and 3D printing. Much of the content I had already covered but interesting course. |
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| VUW Trimester 2/YEAR | | | | | |
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Course Registration/Enrolment

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

Register for courses online in about June, was fairly straightforward however not much help available. You do not officially register for the courses yourself you send your preferred courses to the International Faculty and they to the official side for you.

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 managed to get all the classes I wanted/ needed to take. I even managed to change my elective in the first week of classes.

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

Make sure you do it before the required date, make sure you have got all potential courses signed off by VIC abroad on exchange contract before going. If you can do all 10 (I think UBC asked you to pick 10 papers in the course registration)

Academic Experience

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

meet your expectations?

The academic experience was fairly similar to VUW, courses made up of essays, tests and exams of the same kind of percentage and structure as VUW.

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?

The workload was very comparable. The 9 credit paper was a significant amount of work for a design paper but overall the work achieved in a semester was very 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?

I would recommend what I did. A 9 crd design paper and then two 3 crd papers. The design papers whilst mandatory are very worth it. If not doing architecture 5 x 3crd papers is standard.

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

Get on top of assignments and projects early so it gives you time later to make the most of the trips which will otherwise get in the way. As long as you put in the hours of work you will succeed. Events especially for international students will come heavily at the end on semester so if you want to be able to attend all of them (you should) do the projects early.

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

Internet access and library facilities are fantastic, however computer facilities are hard to come by. In the architecture faculty there are 4 computers. It is expected that you come with a personal laptop. This was not an issue it is just a different way they run the design school.

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?

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E: Accommodation

What form of accommodation did you stay in?

UBC Residence – Fairview Crescent

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

Pros

Smaller flat of 4 (rather than Walter Gage which are 6)

Not a high rise, so easier access

More space in apartments (than Gage)

Cons

Solid 20min walk to architecture campus

What accommodation would you recommend to future students?

UBC Residence – Fairview Crescent or Walter Gage

How early can you move into accommodation?

The day before classes start

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

Card plan – Add money to a card and use it at the food places that accepted the card

Full plan – Full food plan, pretty much for the first years (would not recommend)

Easier to shop and cook for yourself

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

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

Try to get into a residence, off campus living is much less convenient and not much if any less expensive.

F: Personal & Cultural Connections

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

Easy to make friends, great exchange community, made heaps of good friends. The exchange student club was fantastic in organizing events and opportunities for this. Made a few good local friends all through the architecture faculty. The studio environment and the 'good times' events make this easy aswell.

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

There was not a significant adjustment, as long as your friendly you'll be fine.

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

What parts of the culture did you most appreciate?

The friendly people and general love of the outdoor environment.

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

Everyone was very inviting, all university staff were very accommodating. The students were interested and had a great time with the architecture student body.

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?

It would be easy for students with disabilities or minorities to study at UBC. The university is very progressive and has many programs in place to recognize and celebrate the minority student populations.

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

No issues at all

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?

Joined the exchange student club and was the best decision of exchange, through this club went on trips to Kelowna and Tofino aswell as multiple Vancouver events.

Also joined a social volleyball team which was also very enjoyable.

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

Ski. If you are at all into skiing I would recommend buying a whistler season pass and spending your weekends on the slopes. Snoeshoeing/ Hiking is also very good.

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

There were a few opportunities I heard of however as I did not have a visa (studied for less than 6 months) I could not work, therefore I did not pursue work opportunities

What volunteer or internship opportunities were there for students?

There are a huge range of clubs at UBC some of are volunteer based. If you are interested in volunteer work I would suggest looking at Generocity it's a student run Philanthropy club.

5 things to take to your host country or region

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| 1 | Waterproof shoes (take or buy over there) |
| 2 | A decent waterproof warm coat |
| 3 | Something dressy if you want to attend the exchange student ball |
| 4 | Summer and winter gears - will need both |
| 5 | An unlocked phone |

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

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| 1 | Join the exchange student club and go on as many trips as possible |
| 2 | If you are in a residence pay your housing fees by international transfer BEFORE you go. The alternative is withdrawing \$2600 from ATMs in cash (they don't take cards) |
| 3 | Shop at NoFrills (very cheap) |
| 4 | Use your weekends and school breaks to travel the area |
| 5 | Try get to Banff at some point |

Top 5 Things to do

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

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| 1 | Ski at Whistler |
| 2 | Try night skiing |
| 3 | Try ice skating |
| 4 | If possible try make a trip to Tofino to go surfing |
| 5 | Make the most of the campus beach (Wreck Beach) |

H: Personal Experience

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

I had a fantastic time at UBC. I took classes that were interesting and rewarding with some of the highest qualified professors I had worked with. Made heaps friends both within the exchange community as well as local Canadians. I spent my time not at University skiing the slopes of Whistler and exploring the nature and landscapes of British Columbia and Alberta. During my time I managed to surf, ski, ice skate and snowshoe in some of the most beautiful places of Canada. My four months at UBC were great and formed part of a bigger 6 month trip where I travelled the USA with friends I made on exchange. The experiences and friends I made on exchange will be with me for a long time. I will be back to Vancouver very soon.



