

# Victoria Abroad Evaluation Form

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

## A: Student Information

VUW degree(s)	Bachelor of Arts
Major(s)	Spanish, Cultural Anthropology, Development Studies
Exchange Institution	Universidad 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	\$10
Accommodation	\$90 per week
Return Airfare	\$1,300
Local Transportation	\$15 a week
Meals	\$50 a week supermarket, \$6-12 per meal in a restaurant
Visa	\$420
Health & Insurance	\$1,200
Personal Spending	\$8,000 traveling, \$3,500 random stuff (clothes, movies etc)
Communications (phone, etc.)	\$12 per month (company WOM)
Other fees (specify)	
What unexpected costs did you encounter? What items were more or less than expected?	Chile is more expensive than I thought it would be, especially food that is not vegetables as the price was about the same as NZ. Transport was more expensive than I thought taking the metro and bus is like \$3 which is expensive for Latin America. Power and gas costs are included in the rent price so rent is very cheap. I had to pay a lot of money to replace things that got stolen.

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

- I spent only a little more than what I bargained for just because I wanted to travel more. I bargained for about 23,000 and I spent about that

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

- I used a kiwi bank loaded for travel card where you can load on different currencies and it gets converted to pesos when you use it. The only cost when using it as an eftpos card is the conversion, otherwise you are not charged for using it, however they have uped the cost of withdrawing money as a foreigner now and every time I got money out it charged \$12! Maybe a Chilean bank account would be better and just pay once o transfer all of your money to it.

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

- I didn't have to buy text books or anything, just need like \$10 for printing and to buy a couple of books to write in, they don't use their laptops in class usually

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

- Coke maybe like \$1 and a coffee about \$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?

- Yes I applied for a Student Visa which costed about \$420 NZD and the process was about a month long and I only received it the day before I was leaving so do it earlier than that!

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

- Apply at least 2.5 months before you leave, at the latest

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?

- I don't think they have mandatory insurance, maybe medical, but it's good to have insurance for all things. I needed to use medical insurance and I was robbed a number of times so have needed insurance to replace my stuff.

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

- I used the insurance of STA Travel. DON'T use this one, the process for applying for insurance I ridiculous and long and it was totally over-priced. My friend got the same deal \$300 cheaper for like \$800 for a year and the process of applying for a cover was fast and easy for him.

**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
<b>VUW Trimester 1/YEAR</b>					
Antropologia de Envejecimiento	Spanish	Any 3 <sup>rd</sup> year anth paper	20	3	It was quite difficult at the start due to my level of Spanish, but the tests were easy and there were no exams.
Flamenco	Spanish		10	1	This was a dance class

					that was very fun and easy.
Spanish para extranjeros	Spanish	2nd year spanish	20	2	I had to pay a lot to do this course and it was pretty useless as I had already learnt everything in the course.
Chile, los chilenos, y su cultura	Spanish		20	3	This was the most interesting paper as I got to learn the facts about the culture of Chile, however we had to write a 4 page essay every week in spanish which was kind of hard.
<b>VUW Trimester 2/YEAR</b>					
Antropología de la Alimentación	Spanish	300 level anth paper	20	2	
Antropología Médica	Spanish	Medical Anthropology	20	3	
Yoga y Desarrollo humano	Spanish		10	2	A yoga paper, theoretical and practical
Diversidad Cultural y lingüística de Chile	Spanish		10	3	

### Course Registration/Enrolment

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

- Choosing courses was a disaster! A lot were unavailable or clashed and it was hard to pick which ones you could handle with the level of Spanish. I had a lot of help though in changing and choosing new ones from the PME staff.

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?

- Try not to worry too much about choosing papers before you arrive, I chose classes in other faculties outside of my own because I wanted to do those and it worked out ok, they are kind of flexible except if you study politics.

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

- The credits aren't exactly equivalent to like 15 or 20 VUW credits so you may have to take 4 courses to make up for the lack of a couple of credits. Take something fun like dance or a sport because you get credit for it.

### **Academic Experience**

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

- Uni in Chile is harder than in NZ, not necessarily for foreigners, but for Chileans yes. I did a lot more reading and research which took up a lot of time.

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 teaching was less clear and helpful. In NZ they provide sources to help you study and tell you all the time when things are due and the homework. In Chile it is a lot less clear and if you don't attend the lecture, you don't know what has happened because they do not put class sources online for you to see very often. There is more work just because I didn't know how to find info I needed.

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 think 3 or 4 is good, most Chileans do like 5 or 6. A good paper are the ones about Chilean culture as they were helpful in everyday life and understanding of Chile. Also it was great to have a fun paper like yoga and dance so your mind could have a break from academic Spanish during your uni day.

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

- Talk to the teachers, tell them your level of Spanish, and discuss with them your options about tests. Email them with your questions and you will be fine.

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

- I didn't use the library or computers as I didn't even know where they were, wifi is good.

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?

- I learnt 2 years of Spain Spanish in NZ which was almost useless in Chile as their Spanish is cray. If

you want, you can take the special Spanish courses for foreigners but you have to pay like \$400 and it was kind of pointless as you learn more talking to people. Go to Spanglish, an event on Tuesday nights where foreigners and Chileans go to practice English and Spanish. You can't really prepare for Chilean Spanish, you just have to struggle a bit at the start.

## **E: Accommodation**

What form of accommodation did you stay in?

- I went flatting

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

- Freedom and independence, can live with Chileans. No cons, sharing?

What accommodation would you recommend to future students?

- Flatting, not with too many foreigners or you will not practice spanish

How early can you move into accommodation?

- It's not as complicated as in NZ, most of the time there's no contract to sign and no bond to pay. You can move in ASAP pretty much.

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

- I cooked my own in the kitchen, food is expensive but there are a lot of markets with cheap fruit and veg everywhere.

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

- It was easy to find because I was on a site called Compartodepto.cl and its super useful. Use it!

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

- When you contact them to come look at the house, tell them your level of Spanish otherwise its awkward when you arrive and cant understand anything. Use compartodepto.cl to find places.

## **F: Personal & Cultural Connections**

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

- To be honest, it is super hard to make friends with Chileans. Chileans that like to travel are more interested in being your friend, otherwise its pretty difficult Im afraid.

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

- It is very different to NZ, a lot less organized and loud but really fun. It will be hard for the first couple of months.

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

- Learn to be adaptable and patient because the lines are hours long and the people are unorganized and the service is bad. If you learn to be okay with this, it's a lot more fun. Also for the love of god, don't trust anyone with your belongings in Santiago and look after your stuff well. I was robbed 4

times and it's not like NZ, you can't put your bag on your seat, or take things clubbing, or leave your bike chained up in crowded areas, or put your bag beside you in a park. Always be holding your things in public.

What parts of the culture did you most appreciate?

- I really enjoyed the relaxed part of the culture, everyone seems to appreciate things more and have more fun with life.

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

- The people in Santiago are kind of cold, everyone is busy with their own problems. Uni staff were very nice and helpful and only a few students were friendly.

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?

- In the uni, I think it would be fine but in Chilean society, they are less accepting. There is a lot of importance placed on social status in Chile and anyone not following the norms is kind of looked down upon, at least by some older people, but this is slowly changing. LGBTQ people would be fine as it is becoming much more accepted by young people.

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

- Because I am a tall, and what they call blonde, woman, I faced a lot of sexual harassment by men, I mean a lot, and my friends too. This includes cat calling, commenting sexual things, staring, touching, trying to flirt, trying to give you things etc but if you ignore them or tell them to leave you alone, most of the time they do. There is a socially awkward situation where anyone obviously foreign sometimes gets special treatment for example in clubs, and its really uncomfortable when they tell you to come to the front of the line in front of all the Chileans. This is only a small part of the experience though and its not so bad.

## **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?

- There were a lot of sports and fun classes like dance available. Definitely do at least one of these because you can get credit for them and it's a good way to meet people. In other faculties there were a lot of organized events for international students but in mine no which was a shame.

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

- TRAVEL! Chile is huge and the culture is so diverse and much different to Santiago. The landscapes are incredible and you have to see as much as possible.

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

- None that I am aware of on campus. I magically got a job teaching English to people at their homes or in cafes, and they paid me cash.

What volunteer or internship opportunities were there for students?

- UUUMMM not sure there were any.

### 5 things to take to your host country or region

1	A Spanish to English dictionary
2	They don't have flannels (face cloths) so take them from home if you use them.
3	Condoms. They are ridiculously expensive in Chile. If you take the pill, bring it with you as you can get some disapproving looks when buying it. If you need the morning after pill, ask a male friend to buy it for you as sometimes they refuse it to woman because abortion is super illegal in Chile and they're weird about sex stuff in pharmacies sometimes.
4	A replacement credit card or way of getting money. You may get robbed if you look foreign.
5	Padlocks with a combination for you bags when traveling

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

1	Don't buy plug adapters in NZ, they don't work and you can get them for \$1 on the street in Chile
2	Everything is cheaper in Chile so buy your stuff when you arrive (sunnies, deodorant, toiletries, shoes, clothes etc).
3	Winter in Santiago is weak, don't pack big jackets
4	Download Whatsapp and get a Chilean number. WOM is a cheap company.
5	Learn Chilean slang and sayings, they are key to understanding humour and everyday life

### Top 5 Things to do

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

1	Eat and drink all the Chilean things you can
2	Travel to as many places as you can
3	Learn to dance cumbia, cueca and anything else
4	Attend / host an asado (BBQ), they are super Chilean and you have to do it!
5	Talk to the locals about what to do, don't be shy about your Spanish, they love foreigners most of the time.

## H: Personal Experience

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

2016 has been the best year of my life. I love Chile, with all of its imperfections and issues! Chile is so diverse it is impossible to comprehend the huge number of big personalities and cultures and amazing landscapes all packed into one incredible country. My time in Chile has given me patience, tolerance, endurance, appreciation, tranquility, joy, tears and the best memories I hold. Not only are the people I have met some of the most interesting and marvelous people I know, they have truly become life-long friends and family. I wish I could have stayed in Chile forever, it is my new home.



I: University Support