

# Vic OE Evaluation Form

PLEASE TYPE THIS EVALUATION FORM & EMAIL IT TO VIC OE AS A WORD DOCUMENT

## A: Student Information

VUW degree(s)	LLB/BA
Major(s)	Educational Psychology
Exchange Institution	California Western School of Law
VUW Tri & Year of Exchange	Trimester 2 (Fall Semester in US) 2014

## 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	\$600
Accommodation	\$4000 for 5 months
Return Airfare	(Didn't come home - \$1000 to UK)
Local Transportation	\$100 a month (unlimited bus travel)
Meals	\$50 a week
Visa	\$400
Health & Insurance	\$400
Personal Spending	\$2000
Communications (phone, etc.)	\$250
Other fees (specify)	
What unexpected costs did you encounter? What items were more or less than expected?	Sales tax on things you buy, tipping when out dining/drinking

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

**Pretty good. I went over with \$6000 NZD, about \$5000 US and that was plenty (Studylink effectively paid my rent) so I was able to spend all my money on eating, travel and going out.**

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

**ANZ Cash Passport – So easy and so awesome. Can take it anywhere in the world**

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

**Buy food from the supermarket, its pretty cheap. Get monthly passes for travel. Make friends with someone who has a car because America is a big place**

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

**\$2USD (with sales tax that's like 2.10 at the counter)**

**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?

**Visa was easy – just sent my stuff away and they approved me. Then had to make a trip to Auckland to go to the Consulate but it was pretty painless.**

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

**When you go to Auckland, make sure you have everything you need, especially proof of funds and a copy of a passport photo. You also need to leave your passport with them so don't plan on using it for the month or so after you have your interview.**

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?

**No – I just used STA and it was easy**

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

**STA**

**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>					
NA					
<b>VUW Trimester 2/YEAR</b>					
<b>Entertainment Law</b>	English	300 level law	12	4	A lot of reading during the year (30-50 pages a week). Almost entirely case based and coverage of torts, very few

					<p>statutes. Really interesting and lecturer was pretty good once you got to know him. Nice small class (15 people). Cool because it's all about celebrities and the bad stuff they do. Exam was far and away the easiest exam I had. Open Book</p>
<b>Constitutional Law</b>	English	200 law	12	2	<p>Only did it to make up credit and to get studylink. Was interesting because it is so different to NZ law (no constitution). But felt very similar to 2<sup>nd</sup> year, without tutorials. Lots of coverage but not in depth so you never really felt like you got the full story. Open book exam. Felt like a mix of Torts and Public from VUW 2<sup>nd</sup> year where the school is still trying to cull the bum students, big class (150 people).</p>
<b>Alternative Dispute Resolution</b>	English	300 law	12	5	<p>Easiest paper I've ever done. Lots of lame role plays during class but nothing too serious and they were actually pretty entertaining sometimes. Met some cool people in this class. Closed book exam but still incredibly easy. Recommend for free credits</p>
<b>Secured Transactions</b>	English	300 law	12	3	<p>I enjoyed it because I was a Commercial Law nerd/Paul Scott fan at</p>

					VUW. Very similar to the Commercial Law course in terms of the statute (UCC in the US, PPSA in NZ) but their statute is not nearly as good as ours. It was interesting to see the other side of it and see how they worked through fact situations. Exam was tough but open book. Lecturer is a real nerd, but that cute kind of nerd who just loves the law so you laugh at his jokes anyway, even when they aren't funny.

**Course Registration/Enrolment**

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

**All online – I would suggest emailing the people in the office and they pretty much help you through everything you need. I just asked lots of questions and they did the work for me.**

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?

**100% easy, like I said, the office people did the work for me**

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

**Don't be afraid to email and ask questions. Just be polite and you will get all the help you need.**

**Academic Experience**

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

**Not as good as I thought, I would rate Vic as a better school in terms of teaching and learning but that's not a bad thing. You are on "exchange" but it's also a holiday so having easier school work is a bonus because you have more time to explore. That said, it's not a walk in the park. I prepped well for most of my classes, often unnecessarily, but because the quality of some of the teaching wasn't as good so it in fact made the exams harder than they should have been in terms of being confusing. But overall, very positive. Don't be overwhelmed by all the online stuff you have to sign up for. Most of it is irrelevant and useless for a visiting student unless you are participating in an internship program (NOT recommended unless you want to do heaps of work, my US friends hated it). Also everyone does exams on their**

**computers (there's some special software you download) so don't be surprised by that like I was.**

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?

**See above**

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?

**4 papers was easy**

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

**Do your readings during the year – the exam study break is only a weekend so its pretty brutal if you aren't prepared.**

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

**Really good. Great wifi and always free computers in the library.**

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?

## **E: Accommodation**

What form of accommodation did you stay in?

**A lady who works at school rented a room in a house she owns – it is a 2 bedroom house and self contained (bathroom, kitchen etc). Her family lives upstairs. They are good about giving you space. House isn't fully furnished though (no couches or TV or anything) so it looks a bit empty**

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

**Cheap compared to the rest of San Diego (expensive compared to NZ, but so is everywhere). Nice family, easy access on bus to school.**

What accommodation would you recommend to future students?

**Yes – email the school and ask about Susan O'Dean – she actually got in contact with me so she may do the same.**

How early can you move into accommodation?

**Usually whenever, unless someone else is living there**

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

**Cook yourself in full kitchen, Just like a normal house**

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

**easy**

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

**Look around, don't just jump at the first deal you find. If rent is over \$1000 a month then it's way too much. Somewhere in the \$700-800 range is sweet.**

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

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

international) students?

**Hard – the school isn't a typical American College. A law degree is a post grad degree in the US so a lot of people are older and there to work, not party. That said, people are very nice and outgoing. It's not weird to just go up to someone and say hi so don't be afraid to do that.**

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

**Easy – just like NZ**

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

**None**

What parts of the culture did you most appreciate?

**Food – great Mexican**

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

**Very well – people are all friendly and welcoming. Being from NZ I was like an alien so it was a good conversation starter**

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?

**There are lifts so not too hard in terms of physical handicaps. I never experienced any prejudice, everyone is relatively grown up so I would have no worries**

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

**No – everyone loved NZ (those who knew where/what it was)**

## **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?

**Lots of clubs and groups to join within the school – mainly pertaining to law stuff. In terms of sports etc there wasn't much on offer. Cal West isn't the classic US College in terms of number of people and size of campus so while there are lots of clubs to join there isn't the movie-esque basketball/football team.**

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

**Go to Coronado Beach. Gas Lamp on the weekend. Trip to LA (like a 2-3 hour drive). Pacific Beach.**

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

**Not sure - I wasn't allowed to work on my F1 visa so I didn't explore the options. There is an excellent STEPPS program at school where you get to intern at a firm but I didn't do it myself.**

What volunteer or internship opportunities were there for students?

**See above – the STEPPS course is full on, like the equivalent of 2 papers and I'm not sure if it is able to be credited by VUW so you'll need to check it out.**

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

1	Summer Clothes incl sunglasses and hat
2	A coin purse/pouch – I ended up with hundreds of coins all over my desk at home from loose change because they have pennies (1c coins) so you get a lot of change when you pay cash
3	US currency in cash – some places don't have eftpos
4	Togs
5	Sports shoes – the weather is so nice all the time it's easy to exercise and walk

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

1	Buy a big bottle of water and refill it at water stations for 25c
2	Try any street cart tacos because they are delicious and cheap
3	Talk slowly especially in class – sometimes lecturers had trouble with my accent
4	Ask for help before the exam because the format is very different in terms of pens/pencils/computers.
5	Check your university email regularly because all correspondence comes through it

### Top 5 Things to do

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

1	Coronado Hotel/Beach
2	Halloween Carnival
3	Pacific Beach
4	Football Sundays at a bar
5	GasLamp Quarter Mile

### H: Personal Experience

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

**My time in San Diego was awesome. Like I said, I didn't find the work load too excessive so it was relatively easy to balance school and fun so don't worry about that too much. It's definitely overwhelming when you first arrive but everyone is generally really nice. American's are more outgoing than kiwis in terms of simply coming up to you, saying hi and asking for your number to hang out later so don't be shy to do it yourself in class or around school. I definitely had some strong preconceptions about what America would be like (from movies, tv etc) but on the West Coast it's pretty similar to NZ – the people are laid back and easy to talk to so like I said, don't be shy. A kiwi is a real novelty over there**

so be prepared for plenty of jokes about your accent but embrace it as well. Being foreign is a great conversation starter and an easy way to make friends. Plus the more school friends you have, the more notes get passed around. Everyone has an outline/notes from a previous class that you can use once you get talking to them so embrace that as well. Overall, just be a normal kiwi kid and you'll be a hit!

