

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
Major(s) Law
Exchange Institution Dalhousie University, Schulich School of Law
VUW Tri & Year of Exchange Tri 1 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 (Print your own course materials or just read online)
Accommodation \$600 per month (off campus)
Return Airfare \$3200
Local Transportation Free with Dal ID Card
Meals \$50 p/w groceries
Visa Not requires for less than 6 months
Health & Insurance \$300
Personal Spending \$3000
Communications (phone, etc.) \$45 per month
Other fees (specify) Dal requires you use their insurance
What unexpected costs did you encounter? What items were more or less than expected? Winter boots- arriving in January buy boots here, the quality and choice is much better.

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

I spent more than I expected, but had saved more than anticipated so it wasn't a huge problem.

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

Local bank account with Scotia Bank. Super easy to set up and means you have full use of the

bank services here (debit, interac etc)

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

Over-budget. That way you can say yes to as much as possible. We went on trips and did awesome activities like dogsledding, which was awesome, but expensive. Over-budgeting meant I had the fun to do the little extras.

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

\$1

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?

Less than 6 months in Canada does not require a visa, just an ETA which is around \$10 online.

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

n/a

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?

Basic cover- around \$180 for a semester- it is worth getting the full cover. I didn't but wish I had. It covers prescriptions, opticians and dental care amongst other things

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

n/a

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					
Intellectual Property Law	English	n/a	4 credit hours (CH's)	3	Great Lecturer, pretty standard for a law paper
Judicial	English	n/a	3 CH's	5	Not especially difficult but

Remedies					lecturing was poor and content super dry. Would definitely recommend NOT taking it!!!
Professional Responsibility	English	Ethics	2 CH's	1	Same as ethics- really easy- take home examination
Fisheries Law	English	n/a	2 CH's	1	My favorite paper for my whole time at law school. Super interesting as you see all areas of law within it
Elder Law	English	n/a	2 CH's	3	Lecturer is lovely as a person but a terrible teacher.
VUW Trimester 2/YEAR					
n/a					

Course Registration/Enrolment

Please describe the registration process at your host university. What kind of help was available?
 The instructions given are really clear with how to choose and waitlist your courses.

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?

Exchange students get second choice to domestic and international students with regards to course choice so the choice isn't great. Nonetheless, I found one of my favourite papers from law school by taking something I otherwise wouldn't have enrolled in

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

When you are choosing your courses choose as many as possible when getting clearance from VUW. It is a massive pain having to go back and forth between two universities (checking with Vic you can take it, and Dal that there is room for you)

Academic Experience

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

The semester is pass/fail so definitely less pressure. I took 5 papers rather than 4 though due to the credit hour difference, which increased the workload

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?

Really similar, with the exception that some of my classes were much much smaller (8+ people)

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?

Try and schedule your classes so your credit hours equal 4 papers. I couldn't make it work that was so ended up taking 5.

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

Don't take a major paper. It isn't a requirement at Dal for exchange students and requires a 40+ page paper for the course. (Everything has page limits here, not word limits)

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

Awesome facilities! Explore the uni as there are plenty of hidden wee study spots that are gems!

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?

n/a

E: Accommodation

What form of accommodation did you stay in?

Off campus flat

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

Made a much wider variety of friends than those in Res. I had my exchange family (other exchangers) but also my Canadian family- my flatmates were two awesome girls who welcomed me into their group of friends.

It is also substantially cheaper than on campus accommodation.

Only drawback was I was about a ten minute walk from campus as opposed to friends who literally lived right on campus (classrooms underneath their res)

What accommodation would you recommend to future students?

Off campus without a doubt- although I had a few meals in res and the food in Shireff is

FANTASTIC!

How early can you move into accommodation?

Whenever you arrange with landlord/ sublet

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

You can buy a meal plan if you live off campus- I would advise it. I didn't and regret it. It saves time and the food in Res (Shireff in particular) is so much better than halls food at home. There are dozens of options. Its also a really social time, and a great way to meet people. Its not just 18 year olds, there is a huge variety of people in meal hall.

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 is really easy to find a place either through the exchange facebook page (past exchangers post their rooms when they leave) or through Kijiji (I found mine through Kijiji – Canadian version of Trademe- about 5 months in advance which was awesome to get sorted)

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

If you decide to go into res- LeMarchant Hall is definitely the nicest hall. Its really modern and houses a huge variety of people there. I had friends that lived there and loved it. Its also right across the road from the Uni Gym (Dalplex) which is free to use and has fantastic facilities

F: Personal & Cultural Connections

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

I made a group of incredible Canadian friends, I found it really easy as I moved into a really social flat. Friends in res did not make as many local friends.

One amazing thing about Halifax is how friendly everyone is. Ive never felt more at home, welcome and safe as I did in Halifax. People are always happy to see you and nothing is EVER too much trouble.

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

The locals here make it so easy! I didn't realize how much culture shock would hit me, having lived overseas by myself before, and my first 2 days were a total nightmare for this. Once I got out and actually started meeting people and doing some exploring this disappeared so fast. I cant emphasize how important getting in touch with other exchange students going to Dal, before you go, is. They are your support network and are going through all the same things

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

Everything is pretty similar, the hardest part for me was arriving into winter where it gets dark at

430pm and is absolutely freezing.

What parts of the culture did you most appreciate?

Canadian patriotism! Whether it is through Hockey (Ice hockey is just called hockey here) or through their love of Tim Hortons (a national identity!) and maple syrup!

Everyone goes out of their way to make sure you have an incredible time- especially in the Maritimes (Eastern Canada)

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

Gillian at the International Center is incredible. No other words for it. She acts as your home away from home and nothing is ever too much trouble. She went above and beyond when a friend of mine had credit cards duplicated and money stolen. Her door is always open for a cup of tea and a chat!

The international center is great and put on a lot of fantastic events (but I hear more in the fall than the winter.)

Uni staff and students are all super welcoming and happy to help out!

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?

Dal has incredible support services. There are gender neutral bathrooms everywhere, huge societies for minority groups and a massive emphasis on diversity.

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

None whatsoever

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?

Check out the tiger society page- Dal Tigers are the Uni teams, and they have hundreds of societies and clubs to join.

I would recommend going to the Grawood (Student Bar) as there is always awesome events on that everyone gets involved in.

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

Weekend trips away!

We went to Cape Breton for a long weekend in the middle of winter as a group of 14. It was a mix of Canadians and internationals and we had the best time. We went snowshoeing, drove the cabot trail and saw moose- standard Canada!

Nova Scotia also has some incredible hikes- we used to go on a day trip once a week as my

flatmate and I had Tuesdays off- Activity Tuesdays- we would go exploring the areas around Halifax (it helped that she had a car)

Check out Kejimikujic National Park (Keji) and in the holidays Quebec City, Montreal, Toronto are really not that far away (20 hours on a train starts to sound reasonable once you've been here a while)

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

unsure

What volunteer or internship opportunities were there for students?

unsure

5 things to take to your host country or region

- 1 A sense of adventure!**
- 2 Warm clothes (for winter semester)- layers are your friends- buy winter boots and coats here though, it is much much cheaper.
- 3 Some kiwiana stuff for you Canadian friends- they love it!
- 4 All the kiwi slang you can think of. Ive had so many hilarious conversations due to slang barriers!!
- 5 A phone which you can use whatsapp/viber- phone plans are extortionate here so I relied on this not only to keep in touch with people at home, but friends here too.

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

- 1 Take trips at the weekend**
- 2 Get involved- The university has way more going on than Vic does, and absolutely everyone gets involved in it. From "the amazing race" to trivia nights, to hockey games there is always something going on.
- 3 The locals are so friendly, don't be afraid to put yourself out there. They want to be your friend as soon as you start talking
- 4 Take enough money (overbudget) so you don't have to say no to anything
- 5 Keep on top of your work so you can say yes to all trips/activities etc.

Top 5 Things to do

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

- 1 Go to Quebec City. I 100% fell in love with it. In the winter it is a magical wonderland**
- 2 House parties (if you live off campus, have one and invite your neighbors- its an awesome way to meet more Canadians)

- 3 Go to a hockey game (The NHL games are in Montrea/Toronto and are expensive but SO worth it)
- 4 Go dog sledding. Possibly the most heart warming thing I have ever done
- 5 Weekends away in cottages with friends, hot tubs, snow and lots of outdoors activities (Snowshoeing, skiing, Polar dips!)

H: Personal Experience

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

Exchange 100% changed my life. I cant even begin to articulate how it changes your entire outlook on the world. My confidence skyrocketed and it has prepared me for the real world in ways that staying in Wellington would not have. I know have friends all over the world and Halifax will always hold a special place in my heart. You couldn't choose a better place to go on exchange and I can assure you that you will not regret a second of it, I know I don't.

Exchange teaches you budgeting skills, people skills, time management skills, to be adaptable, resilient and grateful for what you have at home all at the same time. You may not love every second of it, I have had moments of homesickness, but every second of it will be worth it.

I truly believe this experience can do nothing but benefit you in the future.



