

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 Commerce and Bachelor of Arts
Major(s)	Accounting, Commercial Law, Finance, Asian Studies and Japanese
Exchange Institution	Doshisha University
VUW Tri & Year of Exchange	Trimester 1 and 2 2015

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	\$50-\$100
Accommodation	\$500 per month
Return Airfare	\$2000
Local Transportation	\$5 per day \$100-\$150 bike
Meals	\$5-\$10 per day
Visa	\$0
Health & Insurance	\$30 per month
Personal Spending	\$200 per month
Communications (phone, etc.)	\$30 per month
Other fees (specify)	
What unexpected costs did you encounter? What items were more or less than expected?	Beef and fruit were more than expected.

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

I spent what I originally planned to spend. It is slightly cheaper than living in Wellington.

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

I withdrew money using my debit card monthly using an ATM.

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

Withdraw a large sum of money monthly using a debit or credit card as you are charged an overseas ATM fee. It is probably not worth the trouble of opening a bank account unless you need it.

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

Can of coke \$2, can of coffee \$2, bottled coffee \$2, coffee \$4-\$5.

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 did have to apply for a visa. No, it was not difficult. When you are accepted to your host university you need to go to the nearest Japanese Embassy and fill out the appropriate paperwork.

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

Apply for your visa as soon as possible.

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?

You have to enrol in the mandatory National Health Insurance after you arrive. It is \$30 per month, but it only covers 70% of costs, so it may be safer to take out travel insurance too.

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

I have a bank account with ANZ so I took out travel insurance with them too. It was simple to purchase but I didn't need to use it so I can't necessarily recommend it.

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					
General	Japanese	JAPA304	50	4	The mandatory Japanese language classes. They were taught by helpful teachers using a textbook and handouts.
Culture A	Japanese	JAPA113	10	2	This culture class had many practical activities such as tea ceremony and Zen meditation.

VUW Trimester 2/YEAR					
General	Japanese	JAPA305	25	4	The mandatory Japanese language classes. They were taught by helpful teachers using a textbook and handouts.
Reading Comprehension A	Japanese	JAPA305	5	5	This class consisted of reading articles and newspapers. It was very intensive and sometimes quite difficult.
Reading Comprehension B	Japanese	JAPA305	5	3	This class consisted of reading Japanese stories.
Written Expression	Japanese	JAPA305	5	3	This class consisted of writing essays. It was quite time consuming at times but not too difficult.
Oral Expression A	Japanese	JAPA305	5	5	This class consisted of speeches and presentations. The preparation for the speeches and presentations was quite demanding.
Oral Expression B	Japanese	JAPA305	5	3	This class consisted of conversation practice and dialogue practice.

Course Registration/Enrolment

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

There is a placement test in which you are placed into a level depending on your Japanese ability. The registration process is then explained by the head teacher of your level and they help you to fill out the necessary paperwork.

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?

The general language classes are mandatory however there are some courses which require advance registration.

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

Apply for all the courses that you may want to take and you can then later drop these courses if you want.

Academic Experience

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

The Japanese courses were far more intensive and completely taught in Japanese. While this took some time to get used to it was what I expected and I greatly benefited from being immersed in Japanese.

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 classes were quite small with around 15 people in each class and the teachers encouraged participation. There was a lot more homework and many more tests.

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?

The general language classes are mandatory and are quite intensive. I would not recommended taking too many classes and focus on the Japanese language course if you want to improve your Japanese.

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

You need to do the homework and study for the tests. The homework, tests and even class participation all count towards your grade.

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

There were always computers and printing was cheap. The library was large and quiet too.

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 courses taught in Japanese were quite intensive and took some time to get used to. I recommend practicing listening and speaking so you have too much trouble understanding the teacher or asking them questions.

E: Accommodation

What form of accommodation did you stay in?

Dormitory.

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

It was furnished and the expenses were included in the monthly rent bill. It was easy to make friends with other international students.

What accommodation would you recommend to future students?

Dormitory.

How early can you move into accommodation?

Two weeks before university begins.

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

There were no meal plans. There are dormitories with shared kitchen facilities or individual kitchens.

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

The dormitories are off-campus, but are close to the university and to public transport.

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

If you stay in a dormitory you will most likely only be interacting with other international students.

F: Personal & Cultural Connections

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

It was quite easy to meet Japanese people who wanted to make friends with foreigners. However, there are not many opportunities to make friends with the local as language was somewhat of an issue and Japanese people are fairly reserved.

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

It was not difficult to adjust as I knew what to expect.

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

It helps to watch and learn from the locals when you are unsure and taking a culture courses at Victoria helped too.

What parts of the culture did you most appreciate?

I appreciated the uniqueness of Japanese culture and the subtle cultural differences of everyday life.

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

I was treated well and everyone was patient and polite and a lot of people will go out of their way to help you when they can.

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 were facilities for disabled people at the university and there was support for disabled students too. There is not really open discrimination in Japan towards anyone.

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

There were not any issues regarding discrimination that I faced but as a foreigner in Japan you are usually treated as an outsider no matter how long you have been there or how fluently you speak Japanese.

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 was a variety of clubs or circles students could join. I would recommend finding a club or circle that interests you and joining as it is a great way to make Japanese friends and speak Japanese.

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

There are many shrines and temples in Kyoto that you can visit. There are many festivals that take place throughout the year too.

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

There are a few opportunities for on-campus that the international student centre would email you about. It is possible to find a part-time job off-campus, especially if you are fluent in Japanese. Many students also teach English. However, you have to apply to add part-time work to your visa which you can do before or after you go to Japan.

What volunteer or internship opportunities were there for students?

There were volunteer opportunities that the international student centre would email you about.

5 things to take to your host country or region

- | | |
|----------|--|
| 1 | Money to spend |
| 2 | Deodorant and toothpaste as they differ a lot in Japan |

3	Plenty of summer and winter clothes as the temperature varies greatly
4	
5	

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

1	Study
2	Join a club or circle
3	Try and make some Japanese friends
4	Do your best to speak as much Japanese as possible
5	Take as many different courses as you can but give yourself plenty of free time too

Top 5 Things to do

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

1	Visit the many shrines and temples around the Kyoto
2	Attend some of the many famous festivals in Kyoto throughout the year
3	Go to Nara
4	
5	

H: Personal Experience

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

Kyoto is a great city to study in as traditional Japanese culture is everywhere. There are many shrines and temples throughout the city and many festivals that place throughout the year. Doshisha University is even located right next to the Imperial Palace in the centre of Kyoto. While living in Kyoto I was able to experience Japanese culture to its fullest. The Japanese language classes at Doshisha University are great. I greatly benefited from being completely immersed in Japanese all the time. The teachers spoke in Japanese, and the textbooks were all in Japanese and if you had a question, you had to do your best to ask it in Japanese. The classes were sometimes difficult but your Japanese improves a lot. Doshisha University not only had Japanese language classes but many Japanese culture and history classes with greatly benefited from being in the centre of Kyoto. While living in Japan, not only will your Japanese language skills improve, but you will gain a greater understanding of Japanese culture and society. I learnt a lot about Japan both inside and outside of class. It was challenging and difficult at times but I learnt a lot from the experience, not only Japan but about myself too. This was a life changing experience and I was able to truly experience Japanese culture and society while studying at Doshisha University in Kyoto.

