

Victoria Abroad Evaluation Form

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

A: Student Information

VUW degree(s)	BDI
Major(s)	Industrial design
Exchange Institution	Eindhoven university of technology
VUW Tri & Year of Exchange	Tri one 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	0
Accommodation	€ 1.700 for the whole time (internet, power furniture ect. Included) bond €325
Return Airfare	\$2,500
Local Transportation	€ 70 bike and bike maintenance and about €100-200 for trains around The Netherlands
Meals	€50-70 per week
Visa	€300
Health & Insurance	\$830
Personal Spending	Varied per week depending on what travel I could take
Communications (phone, etc.)	\$15 didn't buy a plan just used Wi-Fi as it is available everywhere
Other fees (specify)	Flights, change on time, airline and destination. Cheaper than NZ flights
What unexpected costs did you encounter? What items were more or less than expected?	

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

A lot cheaper than wellington for everything had a lot more spending money then expected to use for traveling ect

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

I got at Dutch bank card which help a lot when in Europe as you can use it all of Europe and was free to set up as I was a student so used that for all my local shopping and then would buy all of my flight on my NZ card as it didn't cast any different what card I used for it. It was easy to manage as all my essentials went into one card and all my add-ons went through my NZ card. I only topped up my Dutch card once as it cost \$20 to transfer over so I knew that when I ran out of that card It would cost a lot to top up so it helped me save

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

The Dutch are known to cheep so they know a lot of short cuts at saving money, get to know them to find ways of saving money. Eindhoven is a lot cheaper then wellington so as long as you can handle your money you will be ok

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

It depends on where you get your coke and coffee, as coffee at uni is 45cents while in a coffee shop it is around €4 it is a lot cheaper than NZ for fresh food and meat they just have less of a selection and the supermarkets a smaller

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 just a residence permit, it wasn't difficult the uni helped you one step at a time and you don't need to apply till you arrive in Eindhoven. They set you up with an appointment about 2-3 weeks into arriving and you will get your card about 2 weeks after that. It coasted about €

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

Just that it is a breeze compared to applying on your own or applying for other countries. They are accepting to mistakes and a friendly in the visa offices

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?

Nope you can go with any insurance you want, I just went with STA Travel and never had to use it the whole time I was away it coasted ...

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

STA, they are easy to get in contact with and understand exchange students, the only thing is that you only are covered for emergency consultations with a doctor so you would have to pay about € 50 for a consultation and more for the add-ons, they can get expensive fast.

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					
Only 1 course	English	Course	60	4	It will come off easy at first by the way it is run it to push independence and self learning which is nothing like vic does

					<p>which makes you push your comfort zones and understanding of design, it is as difficult as you want it to be on yourself, you decide how much you would like to push yourself, it wanted to make the most of my time there.</p>
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Course Registration/Enrolment

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

It was the most confusing system ever, I asked for help from past Vic exchange students, TU/e Students studying in Vic and received the help from the TU/e admin and exchange adviser, but the best way I understood it was to get myself involved, I spent most of the term leaning each part of it as I did it, they were understanding that exchange students didn't grasp their system first off, so let you make mistakes and try again

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?

Just do what you feel could interest you, you can make the paper what you want, they keep the briefs simple and you have the room to change it in the way you want to take it as long as you can justify why you wanted to take it in that direction. As an exchange student you get first choice in assignments so go for the ones that interest you the most

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

It changes every year and you can't quite understand it till you are in the mix of it so just pick one that sparks to you. You only have on main project so it's hard to tell someone what's good or bad when you are an exchange student as you only get to trial one. You get a closer connection with clients so try to use them to your advantage, I unfortunately had a bad relationship with my clients, which was a good learning skill but would of preferred to have ones that were a bit more helpful, a language and cultural barrier had something to do with not fitting with my clients but it is great the TU/e offers client contact (not all projects or even subject within project offer clients so its kind of a pix 'n' mix)

Academic Experience

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

Nothing like I was planning but that's the fun of it, I didn't really know what I was in for but I loved that, it kept me on my toes, you had to not only learn about how your course was run/taught in a different country but also learning how to interact with different people, cultural beliefs, language barriers and just having know connection. You don't realise how may connections you have back at home, we are spoon feed every step of the way, from briefs written out word for word on what you should hand in, to just knowing what shops to buy supplies. I had to learn a lot of independence and doing it for myself as they don't sit there and help you though everything. It was a great leaning curve

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?

Independent. You pick the workload you want to take on; you meet with your coach (tutor) once a week to have an update on how you are going apart from that it is just you and your work. You take full responsibility for everything you do. You can fail in your findings of your work you just need to show it and justify why and how you moved on. It was a better leaning skill and would of liked to do it all again to see how I would work a second time around.

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?

As stated there is only really one class you take, you pick your project and you move though that one accordingly to how you want to learn on the goals you set yourself.

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

Work hard, reflect and justify why you did it that way. There is no wrong way so think outside the box and try what ever you want, you are marked on you and how you work/ showcase your work.

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

Unlike vic they do not provide you with commuturs in the faculty, each student has their own laptop with all the programs needed linked up though VPN, it is harder as an exchange student as we are required to use their laptops but some of the licensed programs are difficult to get onto you non TU/e Computer. Make sure you have a Windows or have split your Mac; it will make your life easier. Internet is available all over the campus and unlike vic it remembers your log in and will log you in when you enter campus. The library is a great place to study but not a lot of books to help you with your studies. Just use the vic online library catalog if needing resources.

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 didn't. The university is all taught in English, I picked up some Dutch over my time but it wasn't needed for conversations, as most Dutch are fluent in English. You just have to prompt people to speak in English if they are speaking in Dutch and speak slower as the NZ accent is horrible for everybody else to understand. You could do a Dutch class but I didn't sign up in time, my flatmate informed me that you still didn't pick up on much of the language in the class

E: Accommodation

What form of accommodation did you stay in?

I was in an international house, set up with a housing agency that is contracted by the University. I was in a three-bed room flat with an Italian and a brazilin. Fully furnished with a lot of other internationals living in the building

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

Pros- got to interact with other exchange students as you were all placed in the same housing area. Fully furnished even with bedding and kitchen utensil meant it was easy to settle in. We didn't have to go out and spend money on temporary items.

Cons- only being 3 to a flat sometimes become a bit lonely as you all had different classes and friends, It then become harder to interact with them. A larger amount of people would have been easier to interact.

What accommodation would you recommend to future students?

Try and stay in a local accommodation, you will be taking a bigger risk but you can actually interact with the local culture, you won't feel so temporary. But be careful, as a lot of flats don't want temporary or non-Dutch people moving in.

How early can you move into accommodation?

Not very early, we only moved in on the same day as uni starting. So I had to stay in a hostel on my first night and then move in later that evening when introduction classes ended. It was dark and snowing, not the best move into the flat.

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

My flat did eat for yourselves, which worked well for us as we all had different timetables. We only had a stove, small fridge and a microwave, so you had to get creative with dinners when you became sick of pasta or stir-fry. We were lucky to have a supermarket across the road from our accommodation so it was easy to get fresh food.

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

There was no on-campus housing options. You will need a bike to get around

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

Look to see if you can apply for your own housing or if they offer more of a halls type accommodation. My accommodation type was simple and what I needed but it was hard to interact with people.

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 wasn't like I was expecting, I found that it was hard being an English speaker to make friends, a lot of the other international students English wasn't their first language so they found it intimidating my English skills, and hard to understand the Kiwi accent, they would shy away from me at the beginning and stick to people who spoke their mother tongue. They would warm up over time but I found that my accent and way of speaking hard to change to accommodate for the students less confident in English.

The locals were lovely, they would be friendly but a lot would see you as temporary and would only go so far with being friends. I found that the Dutch boys were more open to help and would find the time to stop and talk to you, while the Dutch girls I found harder to interact with and wouldn't go out of their way to help you. I found a cultural clash with the girls, in a New Zealand setting you would find them rude and bitchy but as they were all like that I had to learn to adjust to their way of interacting.

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

It was hard to adjust to the different way of working, the industrial design department at VUW is very interactive and social, there is always people in the studio to converse ideas with or ask help. Everyone works together in one room. The ID department in TU/e most work at home and if they are working at uni they work by themselves, they don't interact with each other or work together to generate ideas.

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

The language barrier between only English speaker (New Zealanders and Australians) and other international student that English isn't their first language, I wish I knew that being at an Erasmus University

I would be the minority with the international students, there was only 7 only English speakers while the rest were all fluent in other language. I didn't quite comprehend how hard it would be to interact with these people, as my level of English intimidated them. But not really being around people like this in New Zealand you can't really comprehend what it's like for them or how bad our accent is for them to understand, I had to learn to speak differently and come to terms that I was now the minority.

What parts of the culture did you most appreciate?

I grew to appreciate the language barrier, it made me see how sheltered we are here in New Zealand, we are so naïve when it comes to languages, we aren't forced to learn another one or adjust to other people, we expect them to jump for us. I may or not pick up on much of the language but I tried to spend the time making our accent easier to understand and taking the time to pick up a few words in a wide variety of languages.

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

They didn't mind that I could only speak English, as most were fluent. I found that the locals were just as happy to help you as you would find in NZ and would sometimes take the time to ask where you were from and why you were living in the Netherlands. Like stated before I found the men friendlier than the women, which was sometimes hard to work with, as the women could be a blunt when you were asking for information. The staffs at uni were helpful depending on their personality; some were more understanding or helpful because I was an exchange student.

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?

good

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

n/a

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?

They had a sport center in campus but I didn't get around to signing up

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

Anything and everything, Europe is on your doorstep and so cheap. I spent a lot of time seeing museums and art galleries as they have a huge collection

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

Unclear on the question, work as in a Job or study work??? Was not able to work with the study permit

What volunteer or internship opportunities were there for students?

If you were a non-exchange student you could apply for an internship for the second half of their year

5 things to take to your host country or region

1	Vegemite
2	Unpack half of your clothes, you don't need much, less is easier to handle
3	Camera
4	Travel Towel, never know when you will need that
5	All of your documentation

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

1	Learn to pronounce your words,
2	Clear up space on your laptop
3	Load windows on to your mac computer
4	Learn to manage your own time
5	Buy a bike and two locks

Top 5 Things to do

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

1	Kingsday
2	Canaval
3	tulips
4	Try all the Dutch food, stoopwafels, krokets, curry sauce and Dutch Mayo
5	Strijp S

H: Personal Experience

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

It was amazing experience and would do it all again if I could. Never wanted to come home. I did have my ups and downs. Found homesickness really hard to overcome as I had no family there to help me along and the time zone made it harder to communicate, so would find myself feeling more homesick around late afternoon when the whole of NZ was asleep, but I keep myself busy and tried to enjoy the country I had at my doorstep. I sometimes found it hard being the minority, the one with the accent, from that strange land who was only here for so long. I sometimes

found I was on the outside. But the exchange also had it ups, I really enjoyed meeting new people, all different personalities and backgrounds, it was interesting seeing different values in life seeing how people handled situations differently, I become friend with a very diverse group of people and learnt so much about interacting and appreciating different cultures and values.

No day was ever the same, I found myself all over Europe interacting with different people and scenarios, from football games and music festivals in Scotland to sailing across the Greek Sea and all the art galleries and museums in between. I found it so easy to jump on a last minute plane, bus or train and end up having a weekend in Paris. I found it so freeing to just make a decision and go, I didn't have to ummm and Ahhh about what I should do or who I should make plans with, I could just disappear off into the world Before I left I set myself the goal to find out whom I am when I have no one to fall back on or hide behind, I certainly pushed my independence on this exchange.





