

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
Major(s)	Accounting and commercial law
Exchange Institution	University of Groningen
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	\$200
Accommodation	\$2700
Return Airfare	\$1400
Local Transportation	Bicycle \$100 (buying second hand)
Meals	\$35 per week eating in; \$700 only eating in for whole exchange
Visa	\$250
Health & Insurance	\$400
Personal Spending	\$8000 (I did heaps of travelling)
Communications (phone, etc.)	\$120 (on a monthly plan for 1GB and call time)
Other fees (specify)	
What unexpected costs did you encounter? What items were more or less than expected?	There are alternative, cheaper ways to travel other than flying e.g. bus/train.

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

Pretty on par, except for personal spending on travelling, which slightly exceed what I initially planned.

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

University of Groningen has an agreement with ING bank and let's exchange students open up an account with them. All information is provided upon arrival. A travel card/credit card from home is useful for online transactions.

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

Look out for transport deals and when there are offers. Buy books/furnishings for your room second hand.

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

2-3 euros

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?

Applying for the MVV (residence permit) for me was difficult, however I am holding a Malaysian passport so different policies apply.

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

Do it as soon as you can, especially if you plan to leave NZ earlier than when university starts.

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?

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

AIG; Didn't need to use insurance while on exchange so I cannot make a good recommendation.

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					
International Strategic Management	English	Elective	15 points	2	A lot of group work but easy to understand
Capital Structure and Financial Planning	English	Elective	15 points	5	Need a solid foundation of finance before taking this course
Interaction Design	English	Elective	15 points	2	A little bit of image editing knowledge required
International Business Law	English	COML306	15 points	4	A LOT of content to learn but not hard

International business environment	English	Elective	15 points	3	A more in depth version of ECON 141
Asset pricing and Capital budgeting	English	FINA 211	15 points	4	Do questions for tutorials/ show up to workshops to do well.
VUW Trimester 2/YEAR					

Course Registration/Enrolment

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

There is a schedule planner than can show you what a potential timetable will look like with certain courses and whether or not they clash. Registration itself was quite easy. You can email the exchange office if you need to change courses after deadline if you find a clash etc., very friendly.

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?

I managed to get most of the courses I wanted. I only really needed 2 so I made those a priority and based my other courses around them.

Check your emails and enroll early, make sure courses don't clash and you have the correct prerequisites (some courses can be quite hard, or may not allow you to take it because you don't have sufficient knowledge)

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

Email the lecturer if what you want to take is not on offer to exchange students, some lecturers are nice enough to let you take the course, but you must notify the exchange office too.

Academic Experience

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

Courses were harder than expected. There is a lot more discussion that goes on in tutorials as well as group assignments.

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?

Lectures are 2 hours long instead of 2 1 hour lectures split. Tutorials are also 2 hours long. The workload is a

little bit heavier than Victoria.

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?

International strategic management was interesting and very interactive throughout the semester as it required a lot of group work. You have to do work/study each week to prepare for tutorials but they don't go over weekends so you still have free time on weekends

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

Do tutorial questions before going to tutorial.

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

Quite advanced.

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?

Dutch was their native language however they all spoke English as well so there was not language barrier however there was an introductory language course offered at the start of the semester for people wanting to learn a bit of Dutch.

E: Accommodation

What form of accommodation did you stay in?

Student accommodation

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

Convenient, possibly not the cheapest form of accommodation

What accommodation would you recommend to future students?

Student accommodation <https://www.sshxl.nl/> caters for exchange students. From there you can choose which specific accommodation house you'd like to stay in based on location, you may want to choose base on which campus you will be spending most of your time in.

How early can you move into accommodation?

On the day university starts- quite inconvenient as I needed to be here during orientation week, so I had to find a student hostel for that one week.

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

I had a shared kitchen with 12 other people.

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

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

Check the location of the accommodation relative to which campus you'll be spending most of your time in.

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 easier to mix with internationals than locals as they have their own group of friends already.

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

People are very friendly; they love speaking Dutch.

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

The locals are quite friendly when you start talking to them. They are very liberal and smoke and drink a lot which I wasn't quite used to.

What parts of the culture did you most appreciate?

How understanding and nonjudgmental they were.

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

Very well.

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?

Dutch culture is known to be very liberal, so although I didn't get much opportunity to interact with such students I assume they are well looked after.

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

I didn't face any issue.

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 have a gym membership you can sign up for-best to do it at the start of the semester as they charge by the semester. This allows you to sign up for classes and use gym equipment.

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

Visiting other parts of The Netherlands is an easy day trip by train (2 hours to Amsterdam one way) Rotterdam has some funky architecture. Depending on the season, Keukenhof gardens to see tulips, or if you can drive, hire a car and go to the countryside to see fields of tulips.

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

Did not look into work.

What volunteer or internship opportunities were there for students?

Did not look into voluntary work.

5 things to take to your host country or region

1	Sunglasses
2	Warm clothing
3	Anything orange, it's their national colour-for Kings Day
4	A backpack/hand carry to use while travelling
5	

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

1	Join up facebook groups regarding Groningen, there are a lot of information on those groups and people to help you, if you ask e.g. 2 nd hand bikes, train tickets, 2 nd hand textbooks
2	Join all the startup/orientation activities gives you a chance to make friends before uni starts.
3	The locals will speak Dutch to you but they can speak English
4	Know where the exchange office/reception is-first port of call if you have any issues
5	

Top 5 Things to do

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

1	Walk up Martini tower
2	See the colourful houses in Reitdiephaven, Groningen
3	Experience the nightlife
4	Ride a bike through Noorderplantsoen
5	Den Haag- about 2.5 hour train ride

H: Personal Experience

I went into exchange with a totally open mind. When I first arrived, it was in the middle of Winter so the days got dark at around 4pm in the afternoon. People were friendly but you need to put yourself out there. It is easier to mix with international students than local students. The courses were more intense than Victoria's courses but if you study, you can keep up. It was great to be able to immerse myself in a different culture and be able to travel Europe.

