

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 Arts
Major(s)	Criminology and Cultural Anthropology
Exchange Institution	Lancaster University
VUW Tri & Year of Exchange	Trimester One and Two 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	\$4785
Return Airfare	\$5000
Local Transportation	\$500
Meals	\$1000
Visa	\$650
Health & Insurance	\$500
Personal Spending	\$2000
Communications (phone, etc.)	\$220
Other fees (specify)	
What unexpected costs did you encounter? What items were more or less than expected?	Bus is a lot cheaper than I thought! It's 2.50quid for a return into town, which is the equivalent of a one way ticket into town in Wellington.

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

I spent more than I had originally planned due the fact that I was going out a lot more than expected, the nightlife is highly socialized in Lancaster so my friends were going out at least once a week, usually two times a week. I also did a lot more travelling than I thought, whether it was just around the UK to visit my friend's homes, or across Europe.

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

I got a bank account through Barclays using an Eftpos card and did bulk transfers from my New Zealand account into my Barclays account. This saved me the conversion fee and was super easy to set up.

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

Budget! Make sure you budget and stick to that budget!

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

Coke was about 2quid (\$4.50) and coffee was about 1.80quid for a small (\$4) and 2.50quid for large (\$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, because I was doing a year exchange I had to apply for a tier 4 Visa, which allowed me to study and travel for the year, as well as working 20 hours during term time. It wasn't too difficult, however took about 3weeks to get it approved as I had to have a meeting at the UK embassy and then send my current and previous passports to Manila! It cost about \$650.

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

Apply with plenty of time to get it approved and sent to Manila!

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?

I'm unsure as my dad is part of the New Zealand police organization so I got my insurance through that.

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

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					
Crim205	English	Crim211	15	3	
Crim218	English	Unspecified	15	2	
Crim235	English	Unspecified	15	2	

Socl208	English	Sosc215	15	3	
VUW Trimester 2/YEAR					
Crim205	English	Crim211	15	3	
Crim218	English	Unspecified	15	2	
Delc211	English	Unspecified	15	4	
Socl208	English	Sosc215	15	3	

Course Registration/Enrolment

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

It was quite difficult because of the time difference, as I needed to call for assistance and was often on the phone at 11pm discussing my course enrolment, however when I got there and went into the offices it was super easy and no hassle at all.

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 got into all the classes I wanted as they have a hall set up when you arrive with all the faculty members there ready to sign you into the courses so it takes a matter of minutes. Before you leave you just need patience in trying to contact them but they are super helpful anyway.

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

Don't leave it to the last minute and have patience in contacting them.

Academic Experience

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

The course load was similar, as well as the online system for readings and announcements, and the lecture material was as I thought it would be.

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?

It was about the same!

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?

Any courses that relate to your degree, they are all very interesting and well structured. I would recommend at least four courses as I found I still had a very empty timetable.

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

Continuing to talk to your lecturers to make sure you are on the right track, and getting on top of your essays before they are due so you aren't stressed towards the deadlines as they are all very similar deadlines.

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

Really, really good! Easily accessible and internet was reasonably reliable.

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?

Halls of Residence – Pendle College

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

Pros – it was super social and I am a massive netball lover and they had a really good netball team. It wasn't completely on the edge of the campus but wasn't surrounded by lecture buildings so wasn't noisy and busy.

What accommodation would you recommend to future students?

Fylde College if you are a massive sport nut

Cartmel if you want a little bit of quiet

Pendle or Grizedale College if you want a communal and social environment

Lonsdale if you want a party environment!

How early can you move into accommodation?

Usually the Saturday before fresher's week begins. (You can move in earlier but it will cost extra per night you stay.)

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

I was in a self-catered flat, which was really well equipped with oven, fridge, stove top, microwave and cupboard space, however you will need to buy your own pots, pans and cutlery etc.

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

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

Research the accommodation first and make sure you apply sooner rather than later.

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 joined heaps of societies and ended up making friends with almost everyone in my college because even people I had never met recognized me as the token kiwi! I made lots of life-long friends with whom I was distraught having to leave them, but I know they will always be there for me when I go back to visit.

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

The British culture isn't too different, but I picked up on all the differences fairly quickly and all my friends helped me adjust and learn about the different ways of life!

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?

The people, they are a lot of fun and extremely social.

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

The locals just treated me as another local, and the staff at the university were super helpful and always there to chat through any issues, and the students treated me as another student, but were more interested because I had a different cultural background which they loved hearing about.

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?

Super easy, the accommodation I stayed in had disable access to rooms, assistance provided to those who needed it, and there are current members of the JCR who are gay, lesbian and transgendered. While I was studying there, they even had unisex toilets put in at the college bar. There are also various societies that support these gender choices.

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

No absolutely none! If anything they adored the kiwis!

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 everything! From netball, football, to mahjong and the Pokémon club! I would do as I did and join as many societies as you can!

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

Travel as much as you can! Go to the Lake District, and do not come home until you have! Also go to visit your friends' homes across the UK! It's a great way to see the country, getting free travel, food, and accommodation! See some sports games (especially football), and just socialize.

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

So many! I had two jobs, both on campus. I worked in the accommodation department over summer room

checking, and then at costa coffee on campus during term time. Another GREAT way to make friends and earn money while doing so!

What volunteer or internship opportunities were there for students?

I'm not sure about internships, but there is an animal shelter about 40mins walk from Uni that I used to volunteer at. I would walk and play with the dogs, and regularly volunteer in the café they had, even made a Pavlova for them to sell once!

5 things to take to your host country or region

1	Camera
2	Cellphone
3	Laptop
4	Good knowledge of New Zealand
5	An open mind

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

1	Join as many societies as you can
2	Make as many friends as you can
3	Travel as much as you can
4	Always say yes!
5	Don't be afraid to jump out of your comfort zone! No regrets!

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 the Lake District!
2	Road trip with friends
3	Explore
4	Go to the sugarhouse (Student night club)
5	Do something you would have never thought of yourself doing!

H: Personal Experience

I honestly don't have a bad thing to say about my experience. I would do it all over again within a heartbeat if I could. The only downside of the exchange was having to leave my friends and the life I made over there behind. It was just too good to be true!! The subjects I studied were so incredibly interesting and I actually enjoyed every assignment I completed, and the university campus is so well set out it was never hard to find where I was going. The people were definitely the highlight, I made some of the best friends I have ever had and will be friends with them forever. The social life I made was one I would never have imagined myself having, and the academics were so incredibly interesting and enjoyable. I was able to travel all over Britain and Europe in my weekends and holidays, and to my best friends homes across the country ranging from York, Southport, Wirral, Chorley, and even Windsor! I would recommend a Victoria Exchange to anyone, as my exchange has been the best year of my life.



