

Victoria Abroad Evaluation Form

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

A: Student Information

VUW degree(s) BA
Major(s) Media Studies, History
Exchange Institution University of Leeds
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 NA
Accommodation \$8,500
Return Airfare \$2,200
Local Transportation \$4 a day
Meals \$50 a week
Visa NA
Health & Insurance \$500
Personal Spending \$200 a week
Communications (phone, etc.) \$40 a month
Other fees (specify)

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?

My anticipated budget was spot on with everything costing what I expected. I only really lost money around a cancelled trip which didn't allow for a refund.

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

I used the AirNZ OneSmart mastercard which was amazing. It's a cash passport, so all my money is already

in the foreign currency, so I saved on lots of exchange fees and there are three free cash withdrawals a month.

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

Use the OneSmart card! Everyone in England uses paywave/contactless and so you'll be like a local. Groceries are a lot cheaper in England too but travel can be more expensive.

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

Coke = £2/3

Coffee = £3

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?

Because I was studying for less than 6 months in the UK, I didn't need a VISA.

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

Don't get a VISA unless you have to. It's a waste of money otherwise.

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 not sure if Leeds had mandatory insurance but I had comprehensive insurance which covered everything.

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

Allianz - through STA. It's a piece of cake to use and to make claims.

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					
Forming Victorian Literature	English	300 level	20	2	A very easy English course

Critical theories of media	English	200 level	20	3	Loved this course!
Histories of media	English	100 level	20	1	I didn't like this course much. The content was interesting but the lecturer treated the class as though we were all first years and didn't know a single thing. She also marked harshly because of this to 'prove a point'.
VUW Trimester 2/YEAR					

Course Registration/Enrolment

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

I had to change my courses via email before I arrived at Leeds as the original ones I applied for were full (for English that is). They had some weird criteria for which courses exchange students could take but were happy to help.

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?

See above. I would recommend having several options for humanities courses at Leeds as there are lots of courses not available to exchange students because classes are so small and prioritised to Leeds major students.

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

Courses at Leeds are relatively easy in comparison to Vic. They are structured around seminars (tutorials) and not lectures. Courses that are 100% internal also only have a couple of assignments with the last major assignment worth most the grade, if not 100% of the grade. If you can pick courses that are internal only you have more time to travel.

Academic Experience

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

Other than the differences between seminars and lecture emphasis, it was very similar. Classes are much smaller so the lecturer knows you personally.

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 workload was reading heavy, more so than Vic, but way less assignments.

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?

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

Do the readings.

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

Much flasher than Vic. They had 3 libraries and great facilities. Internet access never failed

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?

Hall of residence - flat style (Lupton)

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

Great flatmates and facilities - large rooms and amazing storage.

Not really any cons other than perhaps it was 30 mins from campus.

What accommodation would you recommend to future students?

Lupton is great and amazing value for money.

How early can you move into accommodation?

A week or so before tri starts.

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

Lupton was self-catered and we had everything in our kitchen that you could need. The staff were happy to

replace broken things immediately.

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

Living off campus in Headingley was as great an experience as going to Leeds Uni. Headingley is a popular student hub with heaps of opshops and bars with a great social, cafe vibe. There's also a student supermarket with cheap prices.

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

You won't get your first choice so be willing to compromise.

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 had two big groups of friends: local and international. I made friends with my flatmates (all locals) and their friends and then also had a group of other exchange students to hang out with lots.

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

Basically the same as NZ, so not much to adjust to.

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

What parts of the culture did you most appreciate?

I appreciated how much Brits can drink haha.

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

I didn't meet a single person in Leeds who wasn't friendly. Lecturers are so willing to know students personally (they're all tutors) which makes a difference. Students were just as willing 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?

Leeds is a student city and incredibly open to everyone. They're all hugely accepting.

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

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?

Anything you can think of Leeds offered. I did horse riding which was really cheap (for riding) and easy to access through public transport.

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

Go on the organised trips through the Union to places like Durham, Newcastle, Lake District.

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

I'm not sure - I wasn't allowed to work or volunteer due to my 'VISA' conditions.

What volunteer or internship opportunities were there for students?

5 things to take to your host country or region

- 1 Camera
- 2 Phone - offline google maps!
- 3 Cash passport
- 4 Hoodie - trust me, you want comfy clothes
- 5 Clothes for all weather conditions

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

- 1 Offline google maps is your best friend
- 2 Stay in hostels!
- 3 Travel alone - you'll never actually be alone
- 4 Learn the language
- 5 Try something new in each place

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 Bierkeller on a Wednesday night!
- 2 Join a club or society
- 3 Explore the Student Union

- 4 Go on the organised day trips around England
- 5 TRAVEL! (RyanAir does crazy cheap flights from Leeds Bradford)

H: Personal Experience

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

My exchange experiences exceeded all of my expectations! I ended up only spending 55 days in Leeds and spent the rest travelling to 23 countries around Europe/55 cities. This was the highlight for me and my goal was to get as much travel out of the trip that I could and I did. :) I would highly recommend students travel as much as they can afford to - both financially and study wise. Because the study load was easier for me than Vic it made travel and study easy to work around. Study abroad will change your life and open your eyes to things you would never have considered. Travel is great but study abroad as a whole is amazing!