

# 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)	Politics and International Relations
Exchange Institution	University of Leeds, United Kingdom
VUW Tri & Year of Exchange	Trimester 2, 2015 - Trimester 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	\$80
Accommodation	\$220 per week
Return Airfare	\$1800
Local Transportation	\$5 per week
Meals	\$60 per week
Visa	0
Health & Insurance	0
Personal Spending	\$100 per week
Communications (phone, etc.)	\$30 per month
Other fees (specify)	0
What unexpected costs did you encounter? What items were more or less than expected?	Local transport was a lot cheaper than expected, although I hardly used it as I could walk everywhere I needed to go within half an hour. I probably spent more on accommodation than I should have, but I loved my hall of residence so I think it was worth it.

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

I spent more than I intended to, but only because I had the money in my account. It would be easy to do it cheaper than I did. I found my weekly shop and covering the basics really cheap, but going out lots and going away from weekends soon decreased my bank balance.

By what means did you maintain your finances? What would you recommend? (Credit card, foreign bank account, travelers checks, etc)? I set up a local bank account as soon as possible and used that. If I needed to transfer cash from NZ to the UK I would withdraw a large sum from my NZ account at an partnership ATM and then deposit it into my UK account.

What financial advice would you give students attending the same university as you? Try not to convert prices of stuff in your head. If you have a local account, your balance will be in pounds which makes it easy

to think in pounds.

What was the average cost of a can of coke or coffee in your host country? I don't drink either, but I would say about \$3.50-4.50.

**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?

I didn't have to apply for one.

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

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?

No, it was all on the NHS and the student medical practice was really good and super close to campus.

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
<b>VUW Trimester 1/YEAR 2016</b>					
Justice, Community and Conflict	English	International Relations	20	5	I loved this course. It was easy to follow and had a good mix of theory and practical stuff, as well as covering some really interesting conflicts within society.
Development Approaches	English	International Relations	20	4	This was a good course with enjoyable assessment tasks. It

					introduced some really interesting ideas about development discourse, but made me very cynical.
Comparative Public Policy	English	Politics	20	3	This course covered some interesting topics but I found the lecturer was hard to engage with.
<b>VUW Trimester 1/YEAR 2016</b>					
North-South Linkages	English	Politics	20	3	Really good content but with a difficult lecturer who taught at the speed of light.
Philosophy of Human Rights	English	Politics	20	5	Very thought provoking and conflictual, but with a really good lecturer, covering some really interesting aspects of Human Rights.
Revolution and Reaction	English	Politics	20	4	Really good course, good lecturers, taught quite quickly, but good insight into some political theorists who I may not have come across otherwise.

### Course Registration/Enrolment

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

It was really straight forward from what I can remember. The study abroad office at Leeds was really helpful, as was the online information. I changed courses when I got there too and it wasn't a problem 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? Get in early to ensure you get the courses you want. Also be aware of what courses are compulsory for local students and avoid those to ensure you get your first choice.

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

Choose what you think you will enjoy and don't be afraid to branch out.

### **Academic Experience**

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

I only had six hours of class a week which included my tutorials which was a big surprise. I tried to pick up another paper, like I would at Vic, but they wouldn't let me because I was already enrolled in a full time work load. It was quite frustrating, but it meant I had more time for traveling and extra curricular stuff.

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 pretty much the same, other than less hours. We had a lecture and a tutorial per course per week.

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 I've said, I couldn't enroll in any more courses and I was only doing 6 hours a week.

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

They mark from 40-90, instead of out of 100 and depending on the course it is so much harder to do well. I was really disheartened by my first lot of grades until it was explained to me and then I realized that it was still above average.

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

It's all really good and as expected.

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?

Devonshire Hall, a university hall of residence.

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

It was an awesome way to meet people and get involved. It was really close to uni but not on campus. I was worried about the age difference (I was 21) but this wasn't an issue because the people around me were all 20-23.

What accommodation would you recommend to future students?

I think moving into halls is easier because it's organized and a good way to meet people. I didn't meet any study abroad students who weren't in halls.

How early can you move into accommodation?

I think it was two weeks before class started. They had international welcome week, then freshers week, then class started.

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

I was self catered and it was all good. We had to supply our own kitchen stuff, but between all six of us using my kitchen I got away with hardly buying anything.

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?

## **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 pretty much only made friends with local people, mainly through my course and playing sport. In my block there were two other foreign students though and I became really close with them. I found it easy to make friends because I started at the start of the academic year, but I think those who started in February struggled to make friends outside of the new study abroad students.

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

Pretty easy, it was all new and exciting but it didn't take me long to settle.

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

Really well, super welcoming and inclusive.

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 awesome, super inclusive of everyone and has a really big and active student union who are all over equal rights and equality of opportunity.

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

No.

## 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?

I played sport for the uni and for my department as well as getting involved in my hall executive. Leeds prides itself on the size of the student union and the huge variety of clubs on offer. There really is something for everyone.

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

Obviously Europe is right on your doorstep, but even within the UK there is lots to see and do.

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

Not huge amounts, I didn't work.

What volunteer or internship opportunities were there for students?

I'm not sure.

### 5 things to take to your host country or region

1	An electric adapter
2	Laptop/iPad
3	NZ flag
4	Photos/posters from your room at home to make it more homely
5	

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

1	Get involved as much as possible
2	Make the most of it
3	Don't sweat the small stuff
4	
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	Fruity Friday (The Student Union Nightclub)
2	Sport (intermural or representing the uni)
3	Go to, or get involved in, a show put on by one of the many performance societies
4	Explore the Yorkshire Dales
5	Get a ticket to the Rugby League Varsity Match

## H: Personal Experience

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

The year I spent at Leeds was awesome, there is no other word for it. I made some lifelong friends, travelled parts of Europe and the UK, did some courses I wouldn't have done at Vic, representing the uni in Netball and organized events for my hall of 580 people. I really felt at home there and was super sad to leave.