

# Victoria Abroad Evaluation Form

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

## A: Student Information

VUW degree(s)	BCom, BA
Major(s)	Accounting, Japanese (Honours)
Exchange Institution	Meiji Gakuin Daigaku
VUW Tri & Year of Exchange	Trimester 1&2 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	provided
Accommodation	\$8000-10000
Return Airfare	\$2000
Local Transportation	\$2-\$20 per return trip
Meals	\$7-\$20 a meal
Visa	
Health & Insurance	\$100
Personal Spending	\$5000
Communications (phone, etc.)	\$100
Other fees (specify)	
What unexpected costs did you encounter? What items were more or less than expected?	Fruit & Vegetables very expensive, meat quite cheap.

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

I originally thought I would only spend a very small amount compared to what I actually did. This is because I didn't realise how much I ended up travelling around locally and around the country and also to other countries. Money is spent much faster because everything is new or different and so you want to try it.

By what means did you maintain your finances? What would you recommend? (Credit card, foreign bank account, travelers checks, etc)? Having a foreign bank account and doing an overseas transfer can be really helpful because atms can have expensive fees. Credit cards could be preferable for big spending and can't afford to pay for it in the present.

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

Save a lot of money for this trip because you will want to travel a lot/go to lots of different places, buy lots

of things you can't get here or which is cheaper than here.

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

\$1-3

**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? You will have to apply for a student visa for however long for Japan. It will take about a week or two and there was no cost when I did it. To apply, go to the embassy of Japan on Willis Street, go to the counter and ask to apply. They should give a form to be filled out and you will have to give documents such as passport and passport photos.

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? You will have monthly payments for health insurance which isn't too expensive but you will have to sign up for it when you go and a university representative will take you to the place and sign you up. The price will be around \$10-20 a month. This is not travel insurance.

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

I used Southern Cross travel insurance as it was the cheapest option and covered all the necessities quite well.

### 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</b>					
Intensive Japanese	Japanese		4	3	3x a week 6 hours total Mandatory very useful for Japanese learners
Behavioural Economics	English		2	3	
Independent Study	English		2	3	

Practical Japanese	Japanese		2	3	Listening, reading and writing based. Mandatory
<b>VUW Trimester 2/YEAR</b>					
Intensive Japanese	Japanese		4	3	3x a week 6 hours total Mandatory very useful for Japanese learners
Labour Economics	English		2	3	
Practical Japanese	Japanese		2	3	Listening, reading and writing based. Mandatory

### Course Registration/Enrolment

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

I registered at VUW which university I wanted to go to and after receiving an offer of acceptance I sent the university details of myself, medical history etc which was very straight forward. If I had any questions there was a person over there which I could've emailed and would've responded in English.

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? For classes taught in English, you should be able to enter in most classes, however enrolment into classes taught in Japanese will be based on your level.

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

Choose classes which are different to what you are used to and classes that aren't offered here.

### Academic Experience

How did your academic experience differ from your time spent at Victoria? Did the academic experience meet your expectations? With all classes being mandatory and the university having a period system (1<sup>st</sup> period, 2<sup>nd</sup> period etc) it sort of gave me a feeling of being back at high school, which in some ways made me feel constricted to doing things I sometimes wanted to do, in terms of my own time, but also it forced me to learn more about Japan and Japanese which in turn allowed me to have more interactions with students, make friends and practice Japanese with them.

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 teaching style was quite similar with some being similar to lectures with a lot of people and some being

similar to tutorials with more one on one opportunities with the teacher.

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?

Having more classes more than the minimum requirement could become quite tough and a big workload. I would recommend classes to do with Japanese culture such as tea ceremony so you can learn more about the culture side of Japan.

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

Study often and study with friends who have a higher Japanese ability than you as you can do a lot more than what you could by yourself.

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

Very similar to that of Victoria University.

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? Already having a basic understanding of the language would go very far to help you get around. Intensive Japanese is mandatory.

## **E: Accommodation**

What form of accommodation did you stay in?

Dormitory

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

Get to live with your friends, always people to hang out with, food provided, own shower, toilet and kitchen provided, close to campus.

What accommodation would you recommend to future students?

Dormitory is mandatory

How early can you move into accommodation?

When informed by university – possible 1-3 days before start of semester

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

Food was provided every day except Sundays and national holidays, food was average but you are provided with your own cooking facilities accompanied by several restaurants and supermarkets close by.

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

N/A

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

N/A

## **F: Personal & Cultural Connections**

What was it like making friends? How successful were you at making friends with local (i.e., not international) students?

Quite easy if you put yourself out there and get involved with clubs or classes.

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

Extremely fun. Being a student previously visiting Japan I found it nostalgic rather than overwhelming. However for some it can become overwhelming.

What, if any, cultural differences did you find particularly challenging? How would you recommend students to prepare for these differences? Language barrier, students should learn as much Japanese as possible before departing.

What parts of the culture did you most appreciate?

The temples, shrines, castles, historical places, cultural events.

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

Very well, everyone is very kind and inviting.

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?

Possibly by the older generation foreigners in general may be discriminated against but it is extremely uncommon. Other than that every person is likely to be accepted just as much as the other.

Did you face any issues regarding discrimination in your host country? What were they, and what advice would you give to future students? If faced by discrimination, it will likely be by older people, however the most it will be is some weird looks so just leave it and forget about it.

## **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?

Several different sports and cultural groups similar to Victoria University.

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

Go sightseeing, travel to other cities or even other countries. Get the most out of your time there.

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

Not many opportunities to work in Japan.

What volunteer or internship opportunities were there for students?

There was an internship class for teaching which was paid.

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

**1** Cash in both NZ and Japanese currencies.

**2** Devices such as phones, laptops

**3** Gifts for friends, teachers, etc

4	Necessities
5	

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

1	Make as many friends as possible as soon as possible.
2	Get involved with several clubs and activities to do with university or even outside of university.
3	Explore japan as much as you can, don't come up with excuses not to go somewhere or not do something.
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	Enjoy your experience to the maximum.
2	Make lots of friends whether it be international students or Japanese.
3	Share your experiences with the people around you
4	Eat as much food as you can
5	Visit as many places as you can

### H: Personal Experience

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

This experience was one of the best years in my life so far. And this kind of experience is the last chance you will experience anything like this. I was able to make so many friends all around the world giving me connections and reasons to go to those places and also I was able to share all my amazing experiences with these people in Japan. I really do believe that the people you spend your time with really make the experiences you have special and being able to hang out with travel with, eat with etc these people is what made my experience in japan so great. Living by myself taught me so many key skills which I will most definitely face in the future even just simple stuff like housework. Also being by myself for such a long period of time also allowed me to become more confident in myself and my abilities and it has caused me to want explore more about not only japan, but other countries and people. Being able to go to so many amazing places and meet so many amazing people really opens your eyes into what else is really out there. Going to Japan this past year really has changed me in a good way and I want to go back and make many more memories.