

Victoria Abroad Evaluation Form

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

A: Student Information

VUW degree(s)	Innovative Design
Major(s)	Media Design
Exchange Institution	Nanyang Technological University Singapore
VUW Tri & Year of Exchange	Tri 1 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	\$10
Accommodation	\$975
Return Airfare	\$1000
Local Transportation	\$400 taxis were expensive but train is about \$2 per trip
Meals	\$3-6 per meal
Visa	\$100 - \$200 Cant remember exactly but there were a few fees you need to pay here and there, maybe around \$200
Health & Insurance	\$150 + \$300 there is a compulsory insurance you need to get at NTU which is stupid because I already had my own travel insurance. 1Cover was the best option for travel insurance.
Personal Spending	I traveled all around South East Asia while I was there. No idea how much I spent but you can live in Singapore extremely cheaply if you want to. The more money you have the more fun you'll have. In this case, money really does buy you happiness, especially in Singapore.
Communications (phone, etc.)	\$30 per month
Other fees (specify)	There are fees for everything in Singapore. Just be prepared and have money saved.
What unexpected costs did you encounter? What items were more or less than expected?	<p>ACCOMIDATION WAS EXTREMELY CHEAP. If you live on campus the accommodation is extremely cheap and also the food. I didn't cook for myself my entire trip and it was still cheaper than when I was cooking for myself in New Zealand.</p> <p>For guys, the price of entering clubs and buying drinks are crazzzzzzzzzy expensive. \$40 to enter the club, \$25 to buy a beer.</p> <p>For girls, all the clubs are free and you get free drinks all night. So sexist.</p>

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

- I spent less than I expected to spend in Singapore because the on campus living expenses are extremely cheap.

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

- I just used my ANZ Visa card but there's a \$5 fee every time you take money out plus there is a massive exchange fee on what you do take out so you end up losing heaps of money like that. The best way to get around these fees is to take large amounts of money out at once. I kept my money in a safe place in my room and took it out as I needed it. My friends had traveler's checks ect but I don't think it worked out much cheaper because you still get the fee and there's lots of other small fees you need to pay. Either way the bank will scam you, there's no way to get around it. **Just be prepared for the fees.**

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

- **Save your money before you go. Don't take taxi's unless it's a full cab.**

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

- **A can of anything is about \$1-2 similar to New Zealand. You can get Supper cheap coffee at most Canteens for \$1-2. Water is like 60 or 70 cents. The tap water is also safe to drink.**

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 can apply for the Visa through the government immigration website. It was a difficult process because the website was not very user friendly and half the time I had no idea what was going on. Also they won't let you apply until like a month before you go so you will be freaking out a bit. Can't remember the cost exactly but there were lots of fees here and there.**

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

- **Be patient because it was a little frustrating getting the student visa sorted.**

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?

- **Yes, there was a mandatory insurance which I thought was stupid because in the first place the insurance sucked and wasn't very comprehensive and in the second place I already had my own travel insurance. Just get your own travel insurance to be safe.**

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

- **1Cover was cheap and very comprehensive.**

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					
DT3008	English	Mddn300	20		The 5 courses I took at

Animation Development and Preproduction					NTU were the equivalent of doing these three courses at VUW. Don't be intimidated by having to do so many courses because the course work time is lesser than that of VUW.
DT3001 3D Character Animation 1	English	Mddn399	20		
DA2000 Applied Drawing	English	Elective	20		
Da2001 Painting	English		-		
LS 9001 Spanish Language Level 1	English		-		
VUW Trimester 2/YEAR					

Course Registration/Enrolment

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

-There was an exchange student orientation on the first day. The process for course registration was quite complex at first but Singaporean people are very friendly and will be happy to help you.

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?

- Obviously just register for your classes as soon as possible. There are some amazing courses that you can use as electives such as sports, weightlifting, debating and many others. There's courses are extremely popular and hard to get into. Unfortunately I didn't register in time and missed out.

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

- Make sure you apply for more courses than you are actually planning to take. The add drop process at NTU is different in a way that you need approval for your courses before you can even attempt to add them to your schedule. So basically just add every course that even appeals to you in the slightest because if you don't you'll be stuck with no courses (you might not get into the courses that you originally registered for).

Academic Experience

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

- I planned my timetable quite well and managed to put all my lectures, tutorials and studios in two days so I had a 5 day weekend every week. My academic experience was amazing. I got all of my study out of the way in a few days. All my tutors understood that I was an exchange student and that I was wanting to travel so they gave me a little bit of leniency. Don't take this privilege for granted!

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 teachers at NTU talked at you rather than engaging the students in conversation. Most of the students are shy/conservative so they almost never speak out in class or engage themselves in the conversation. I made an effort to always ask questions and reply to the teacher's answers. All the teachers loved this so it made me popular with the teachers and the other students wanted to be my friend because I appeared to be outgoing.

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?

- You are required to take 5 courses. Don't take more. Five is just the right amount. Make sure to choose classes that interest you. I would recommend taking film studies, weight lifting or nutrition. There are many great classes at NTU.

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

- Most important thing I think is to communicate with your teacher and make friends with them. They will understand that you are a busy exchange student and they will keep you up to date and help you to achieve your academic goals.

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

- Internet in Singapore is much better than New Zealand. You can access internet ALMOST everywhere. Their IT is also much better than New Zealand.

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?

- Singapore is an English speaking country, however you will need to get use to their slang. Prepare to start using the word 'La' at the end of every sentence.

E: Accommodation

What form of accommodation did you stay in?

- I stayed in the student accommodation on campus. I would highly recommend it.

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

- **Pros; Gym, Pool, Canteen with at least 15 different food stands, supermarket, convenience store, design faculty and friends are all a 2 minute walk from your doorstep.**
- **Pro/Com; You will have a room mate. At times I wished that I were alone. However, Singaporeans are EXTREMELY polite and respectful. They also won't hesitate to help you if you need it.**
- **Con; You won't leave campus much because everything you need is there. Well that's not really a con but hey! Also, it takes 2 hours to get to the airport which sucks.**

What accommodation would you recommend to future students?

- On campus accommodation

How early can you move into accommodation?

- Only a couple of days before university starts.

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

- No meal plans and no cooking facilities. Don't worry, you will be eating at the canteen and its cheap as chips!

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?

- Make sure you apply in time because Singapore has very strict rules and if you miss the date then there is no way they will reconsider your application.

F: Personal & Cultural Connections

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

- In most of my classes I was the only exchange student was I found it quite easy to make friends. If you show interest in wanting to learn their culture then a local will surely befriend you and invite you to one of their get-togethers (they love to hang out in big groups and do activities).

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

- The first couple of weeks I felt nervous and was afraid I wouldn't make friends but after that I found my kind of people and we all settled in nicely.

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

- Be prepared to line up for everything. Singaporeans love to line up even if they don't know what's at the end of the line. Just get in the line and hope for the best.

What parts of the culture did you most appreciate?

- I absolutely loved how respectful and polite people were. Singapore has brought together cultures from all over the world and has made their own unique multi-cultural society where everybody gets along.

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

- With respect. Don't expect to get special treatment because you are a New Zealander though, Singapore is already a multi-cultural society so you will just get treated like everybody else. And no they won't be amazed to see you because you are Caucasian!

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?

I actually noticed that most buildings in Singapore don't have wheel chair access so there would be some issues there but I'm sure the university would be able to help you out if you had a disability. If not the university then your roommate would certainly help you. Most of Singapore's population is foreigners so don't worry about being a minority! In the past Singapore frowned upon gays, while it's still not that socially acceptable among the older generation you will be fine at Uni. I didn't actually meet a single out of the closet gay person the whole time I was there. However one of my good friends was clearly gay and as long as you keep it private then nobody would really care. You'll be fine! 😊

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

- None

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?

- Every extra curricular activity you can think of they have it! However most exchange students didn't have the time to join clubs because you will be too busy.

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

- Hang out with friends, go see the local tourist attractions. There's not too much to see and do in Singapore in the weekends except hang out. I went traveling every second weekend for the first half of the semester but you will get sick of doing that all the time. It's nice just to stay in Singapore and hang with friends. Do your traveling in mid semester break or before/after uni starts.

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

- The pay in Singapore isn't great and you won't want to spend your time working anyway. However there were some students who were in their final semester and who were looking for full time professional jobs in Singapore. Many of them were successful and got really good jobs. I made some good connections and ended up doing some visual effects for a DJ there. A little bit of money on the side is always good.

What volunteer or internship opportunities were there for students?

- Not sure.

5 things to take to your host country or region

1	Photos of your family and friends
2	An open mind
3	Rain Jacket
4	Camera
5	Money

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

1	Don't bring too many clothes. Don't bring junk you don't need. One jacket will be enough for all your cold weather needs (what cold weather?)
2	Be yourself. Be friendly. Talk to as many people as you can. Be proud of your county.
3	You have plenty of time to travel, you don't need to do it all in the first week!
4	Make sure you leave time to travel around South East Asia after your semester finish's. I would recommend spending 4-6 weeks in Vietnam. Even if that means you can't see another country please don't worry. You have your whole life to come back, please just take your time and see each country well. DON'T ATTEMPT TO 'DO' VIETNAM IN 1 WEEK.
5	Don't waste your money on alcohol. It's so expensive and people don't drink much there anyway. You'll have an absolute blast out in town even if you're not drinking. Trust me, I know it sounds bad but you don't need alcohol to have fun.

Top 5 Things to do

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

1	Hanging out with local friends
2	Eating at the local food courts (Food there is AMAZINGGGG)
3	Spending your time getting fit in the gym.
4	Relaxing by the pool.
5	Cycling around the city

H: Personal Experience

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

Where do I begin? You will have the most amazing time of your life. You will change and develop as a person in ways you never expected. You WILL NOT regret going. You will meet life long friends. Your view on the world will change for the better. You will see places that will bring tears to your eyes. You will hear stories from people who have experienced things you didn't even

know existed. You will spend more money than you expected but you won't have the slightest regret because money comes and goes but memories will last a lifetime. You will lose something valuable to you like a camera or phone but in the long run you will grow from your mistakes and you will learn lessons that most people will never get the chance to learn. At first I was hesitant about going to Singapore because of its conservative nature but please don't worry. Go with an open mind and open heart and you will have the most splendid time. Good luck!