

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 Biomedical Science
Major(s)	Human Genetics
Exchange Institution	Purdue University
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	\$500
Accommodation	\$2700
Return Airfare	\$3000
Local Transportation	\$0
Meals	included in accommodation
Visa	\$500
Health & Insurance	\$1200
Personal Spending	\$2000
Communications (phone, etc.)	\$60/month
Other fees (specify)	n/a
What unexpected costs did you encounter? What items were more or less than expected?	I thankfully didn't run into any unexpected costs

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

My flights ended up costing a lot more than expected because I had to wait to get confirmation on a course approval from both universities so I was delayed in booking my flights, also flying in January is quite expensive. Textbooks were also really expensive.

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

I had a travel card called a Onesmart card that you can get if you're an Air New Zealand airpoints member and I just used that for everything.

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

Save a lot before you go because you will want to do some travel while you're there and either before or after. Everything is always going to be a little bit more than you expect because you'll always run in to some extra cost.

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

A coffee was about \$3.50 - \$5 depending where you got it and coke was about \$1

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 had to apply for a visa but because I live in Auckland when I'm not at university it was quite easy because the American consulate is in Auckland. It was relatively easy but you have to make sure you have completed every little step of the process for the visa. There are a lot of requirements you need to have and if you don't have all the correct documents you'll have to book another appointment. I recommend booking a morning appointment because if for some reason they're delayed or running late your chance of your appointment being delayed is less. It's quite expensive, around \$500 from what I can remember.

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

Read above.

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?

They have an insurance plan you can choose to buy or you can use your own but it was much easier to use their insurance in comparison to my friends who got their own. It's about \$1300 I think.

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

I used the schools insurance company and then purchased Southern Cross travel insurance for my travels afterwards and for when I traveled during the semester.

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 1/2016					
BIOL41600 - Viruses and Viral Disease	English	300 level BMSC elective	15	4	This was a really interesting course - you had a lot of information to learn but the lecturers were really good.
BIOL41800 - Eukaryotic Genetics	English	BMSC343 - Advanced Genetics	15	4	This was another really interesting course - but a lot of work, there were about 6 assignments and 3 exams.
BIOL5800 - Evolution	English	BMSC340 - Genes and Genomes	15	4-5	This was a graduate course with really good lecturers but the content was quite difficult
PHYS2200 - Physics	English	Physics elective	20	4-5	Even though this was a 200 level course their physics courses at Purdue are very advanced.

BIOL49400 Biology Research	- English	n/a	n/a	1	This was an elective research paper I took to get my time in the lab up as there were no labs with any of the biology courses. This was a really interesting opportunity in a research lab.
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Course Registration/Enrolment

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

You select the courses that you have approved by Vic and email your course advisor at Purdue who you are put in touch with by Purdue who is really helpful and knowledgeable about the courses you want to take.

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 courses I wanted to. Make sure you know what you want to do and email your advisor if you have any questions.

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

Try pick easier courses, this is a very academically focused university.

Academic Experience

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

It was a lot harder at Purdue than I expected it to be. This was probably because I was completing senior and graduate level papers when I was only just starting my 3rd year at vic. Purdue is also very academically focused.

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 was much more hands on and the classes were a lot smaller with the lecturers engaging with the students more. The workload is a lot lot more than at VUW.

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 have to take a minimum number of course hours at Purdue (I think it's 12) so do that. The viruses and virology course was super interesting and really relevant to a lot of emerging studies currently going on around the world.

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

Make sure you keep up to date with your homework and exam study and you should be fine. The TAs and the lecturers are also really helpful if you need any extra help.

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

All were really good.

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?

N/A

E: Accommodation

What form of accommodation did you stay in?

I stayed in Wiley hall which is an on campus student hall of residence.

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

This was easy and came with a good meal plan (I was on the 13 track which was all you needed). It was fine for a semester, you have a roommate which is good if you get someone you get along with well but the communal bathrooms and being back with first years is something you have to be prepared for.

What accommodation would you recommend to future students?

On campus is good.

How early can you move into accommodation?

I think it's up to as early as a week before classes start.

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

There is a 7-track, 13-track or unlimited meal plan. The 13-track (13 meals a week) is perfect. There are facilities to cook in some of the halls but in most halls you have to have a meal plan. The food is fine there's a lot of options. It's not particularly fresh though.

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?

Apply early and all the halls are pretty similar.

F: Personal & Cultural Connections

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

A When you first get there if you don't know anyone it can be quite daunting but they have Study Abroad nights before classes start so you can meet other people on exchange easily in the first week. If you're in a hall of residence you get to know your roommate quite well. The locals are really friendly but hard to become friends with.

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

The culture was pretty similar to New Zealand

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

Nothing was really that different. Be prepared for the cold if you are going in the Spring semester!

What parts of the culture did you most appreciate?

It was very similar. The Greek life is quite cool to see in person and is just like the movies.

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

Everyone was really nice and welcoming and wanted to know about New Zealand.

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?

Everyone at Purdue is really inclusive and accepting of anyone.

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

None at all.

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?

There are tons and tons of clubs and club sports you can get involved in. Lots of the club sports teams are good to join for a bit of fun.

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

There is not much to do around West Lafayette in the weekends but enjoy the campus, especially when it's warm. On the holidays and if you don't have much study on take a weekend trip to Chicago and travel as much of America as you can. Spring break in Florida is lots of fun and a cool part of the american college experience.

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

There's lots of work on-campus that you can do but with your visa you can't work off-campus.

What volunteer or internship opportunities were there for students?

There are a ton of volunteer opportunities at Purdue, you just need to look for them and ask about them.

5 things to take to your host country or region

1	Good quality winter coat and boots if you're going in the Spring semester
2	Some photos from home
3	Any treats you want from home
4	Adaptors!

5	I took a power board from NZ and one adaptor which was really useful
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5 pieces of useful advice would tell a VUW student going to your host university

1	Have lots of fun and meet as many people as you can
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2	Use up your dining dollars before the end of semester
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3	The coffee at Lavazza or Greyhouse is the best
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4	Go to a breakfast club
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5	Go to a frat party
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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 Breakfast Club
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2	Visit Chicago and New York (even more than once!)
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3	See as much of the country as you can while you're there
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4	Go to a basketball game
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5	Cactus on a Thursday night, and say hi to Bruce!
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H: Personal Experience

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

Purdue is a really cool and fun university. Going on an exchange will be the best decision of your university career. It is such a cool way to continue your studies in a different environment. I met so many cool people that are now lifelong friends from around the world. I learnt from some amazing lecturers who are at the forefront of scientific research. You get to travel the world and experiences so many different cultures. Take lots of photos and makes lots of friends and lots of memories!



Campus in the snow.



Basketball game - Go Boilermakers!





Spring Break in Florida



Spring concerts on Slayter Hill