

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 Commerce
Major(s)	International Business
Exchange Institution	Rikkyo University
VUW Tri & Year of Exchange	2015, Trimester 1 & 2

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	\$0
Accommodation	\$100 per week (w/ dorm scholarship)
Return Airfare	\$800
Local Transportation	\$10 per week
Meals	\$40 per week (w/ free dorm dinner)
Visa	N/A
Health & Insurance	\$300
Personal Spending	\$100 per week
Communications (phone, etc.)	\$50 per 3 months
Other fees (specify)	Bed linen costs were around \$100
What unexpected costs did you encounter? What items were more or less than expected?	The price of things was fairly similar to New Zealand. It's also quite easy to find cheap food.

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

I ended up spending more on personal expenses than I intended, this was in my range however.

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

OneSmart, which was fine until they added a cap to the withdrawal limit. There may be ways around this.

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

Depending on where you live, it's possible to avoid taking the train. Food is also really cheap on campus and at nearby convenience stores.

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

Coke was around \$1.50. Coffees vary from \$1.50 to \$5.

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?

New Zealand is exempted from Visa fees. I don't remember the process as being particularly difficult.

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

All of the relevant information is easy to find, it isn't too daunting of a process.

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?

Rikkyo University recommended a student health insurance that allowed you to visit the on-site clinic. This was around \$40.

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

I used STA. I never had an issue so I can't really say one way or the other.

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					
Business Negotiation	English	IBUS309	15	1	Would not recommend
Modern Japanese History	English	UNSP	20	4	Really informative
Marketing Management	English	MARK200	15	4	Interesting class
Marketing Communications	English	MARK300	15	5	Great lecturer
Japanese J1	Japanese	N/A	N/A		Great teachers
VUW Trimester 2/YEAR					
Marketing Positioning Strategy	English	MARK201	15	4	Well put together class
Japanese J2S	Japanese	N/A	N/A		Great teachers

Course Registration/Enrolment

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

Some courses are limited enrolment, meaning as few as 5 slots available – this was rather frustrating as it didn't mention this in the course outline. You are able to meet with an advisor that can help you with course decisions. Overall, enrolment is simple, limited enrolment aside.

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 wasn't able to get into any limited enrolment courses (I originally intended to take 3). This was incredibly annoying as I had already got permission to credit these courses. With so few slots available, it's honestly just luck. There is no problem with courses they aren't limited enrolment, just think about some alternatives if it turns out you are unable to take the course you wanted.

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

Just try to keep your options open.

Academic Experience

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

It was definitely different. I think Victoria offers better classes, but Rikkyo's have a unique quality about them. Rikkyo offers courses in both English and Japanese so it is understandable some of them aren't quite as polished as I have come to expect from a university course.

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?

I think university is more laidback in Japan than it is in New Zealand. There were some classes I felt could've benefited from a support team, a lot of the time it was just the lecturer. The workload varied quite drastically between classes.

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?

I ended up taking around 8 courses a semester. The courses at Rikkyo don't have tutorials so you end up taking more papers to compensate. This workload gave me a decent amount of free-time to spend time with other students, travel, etc. Rikkyo's Japanese courses are good, definitely a must, although the atmosphere is similar to that of a high school class.

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

Attend the classes, most courses have strict mandatory attendance and you can fail if you don't meet the requirement.

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

Rikkyo has a great library with lots of resources and room to study. You can easily hire laptops as well. There are also lots of computer rooms.

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?

My preparation was limited, which made the first months difficult in Japan. Rikkyo offers a variety of Japanese language courses at varying levels that really help you get up to speed.

E: Accommodation

What form of accommodation did you stay in?

I stayed at Shiinamachi International Dormitory.

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

The dorm was excellent. Single rooms, fridge, shower, washing machine, aircon. The rooms were like a hotels'. There's also a cafeteria where you get breakfast and dinner, although it doesn't serve food on Sundays and holidays. The food was pretty great.

What accommodation would you recommend to future students?

I'd definitely recommend Shiinamachi.

How early can you move into accommodation?

I moved in a week before orientation. The dates can vary.

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

Mandatory meal plan, no cooking facilities. The meal plan was really good value and the quality was good. There was always rice and soup you could refill.

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 think it was quite easy to make friends with local Rikkyo students. They are all quite eager to talk to international students and they are very friendly.

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

It was difficult at the beginning to get used to some of the differences in culture, but these naturally become easier as time goes on.

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

Japan can be quite bureaucratic which can be frustrating. You just have to be prepared to do things their way.

What parts of the culture did you most appreciate?

The politeness.

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

Everyone was very friendly and helpful.

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 really can't say, but I didn't see any notable discrimination.

Did you face any issues regarding discrimination in your host country? What were they, and what advice

would you give to future students?

Not particularly.

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 a ton of clubs available to students, too many to list. There are groups for exchange students as well.

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

There is always something new to do and see in Tokyo, it's honestly hard to run out of things. Transportation is also excellent, so it's really easy to take a train somewhere further out.

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

I am not sure about on-campus, but there are definitely opportunities for part-time work off-campus.

What volunteer or internship opportunities were there for students?

I don't really know.

5 things to take to your host country or region

1	Appropriate seasonal clothing - it gets pretty cold in the winter and pretty hot in the summer
2	A good wallet – Japan is a cash society, you're going to have lots of notes and coins
3	A smart phone – Google maps and search are incredibly helpful
4	Portable battery – you'll be using a lot of charge
5	Comfortable shoes – there will be lots of daytrips with lots of places to walk to

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

1	Spend your change – 1 and 5 yen coins build up quickly
2	Set up a Japanese bank account early – I recommend Shinsei bank
3	Join a club
4	Practice your Japanese before arriving – you'll be having a placement tests if you are taking Japanese classes
5	Use the library – it's a really good place to study

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 Tokyo's best ramen spots
2	Osaka – Universal Studios Japan
3	Kyoto
4	Hiroshima & Onomichi (Rent bikes and travel the islands)
5	Explore

H: Personal Experience

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

My time in Japan was amazing. The words you'll use to describe your experience will gradually be whittled down to a few generic adjectives that don't really do a good job of displaying just how memorable your time was, but it was undoubtedly an unforgettable experience. My exchange was filled with wonderful people, many adventures and days that I fondly remember. While I found a year away from my friends and loved ones challenging, alongside the struggles of day-to-day life in a foreign country, I can't stress enough that you'll have the support of the people around you, the host university, as well as from back home. I miss eating the best ramen in the world in Ikebukuro, cycling across islands near Hiroshima, spending the day at Universal Studios Japan in Osaka and so many other things that I am glad to have experienced.

