

Victoria Abroad Evaluation Form

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

A: Student Information

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| VUW degree(s) | BCOM |
| Major(s) | Finance, Economics |
| Exchange Institution | Sciences Po |
| VUW Tri & Year of Exchange | Tri 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.)

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| Books | \$0 |
| Accommodation | \$535 per month |
| Return Airfare | \$3500 for day time only flights including stops in Singapore and Dubai for 3 days each. |
| Local Transportation | Paris metro costs EUR 1.80 for a single trip, or EUR 70 per month for unlimited. |
| Meals | University cafeteria had meals for EUR 3.20. I spent about EUR 100 per week on food and drinks. |
| Visa | Around \$100-150 at home, plus about EUR 50 when confirming it in Paris. |
| Health & Insurance | Compulsory healthcare with the university costs about EUR 220. |
| Personal Spending | About EUR 3000, most of which was on flights and accommodation elsewhere in Europe. |
| Communications (phone, etc.) | Unlimited calls and texts, plus 3gb of data costs EUR 19.99 per month, Sim card costs EUR 10 (Free Mobile). |
| Other fees (specify) | |
| What unexpected costs did you encounter? What items were more or less than expected? | Sports classes have a fee of about EUR 50. |

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

I spent a lot more on food and drinks than expected. A pint of beer in Paris will cost about EUR 5 – 8, which can add up very quickly.

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

I had a Westpac bank account who have a partnership with BNP Paribas that allows me to withdraw without incurring the \$8 fee. I would recommend opening a (or a few) bank account over there, as the banks offered EUR 140 free with each new account.

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

Eat lunch at the CROUS cafeteria at the medical school across the road from building 56. It's EUR 3.20 and is filling. Open as many bank accounts as possible to take advantage of their offers, but don't forget to close them. Avoid Free mobile's Fixed term plans.

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

Coke – EUR 1, Coffee – EUR 2.

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?

Yes. It was easy to do the New Zealand part of it. Just set an appointment and bring all the required documents to the embassy. The meeting took about 15 minutes and you have to pay a fee. When you get to Paris, you have to confirm it. This costs another EUR 50 or so, and it took me 4 visits to their office to finally complete it. I would advise having documents such as rent agreements written in French rather than English. You also have to do a health check up, which consists of a vision test and an X-ray of your lungs.

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

Do it as soon as possible.

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 were two options, and they were supposed to be exactly the same. I never had to use it, but it cost EUR 220.

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

Cannot say, the two options were exactly the same in terms of benefits and I did not need it.

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 |
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| VUW Trimester 1/YEAR | | | | | |
| Family Economics | English | elective | 300 | 3 | Not hard, but the first half of the course is not |

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| | | | | | very interesting. Two assignments and two in class exams. Pretty common knowledge. |
| Development Economics | English | elective | 100 | 3 | Again, not very interesting, just a multiple choice test and a final exam. |
| Strategic Studies | English | elective | 100 | 4 | I had never taken a course like this. The lecturer was very enthusiastic and the content was quite interesting. Assessment was just a midterm essay and a final in class essay. |
| Money and Banking | English | elective | 100 | 2 | Very good lecturer who made the content interesting. It is easy if you have done econometrics before, otherwise you may struggle. Two assignments and a final in class exam. |
| Economics of the EU | English | elective | 100 | 4 | This was split into a lecture where attendance was not compulsory, and a tutorial, where you do most of the learning. Assessment was based on a group presentation, a partner presentation, an in class exam, participation, and an essay. |
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| VUW Trimester 2/YEAR | | | | | |
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Course Registration/Enrolment

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

Not much help available, but it is very straightforward. You do have to write a motivational letter, but I don't think they base much on it in terms of acceptance.

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 everything I wanted. It was first in first served. Stay up, and refresh your page until 12am, when classes open. If you miss out, you will struggle to change to what you wanted. People may be willing to trade classes. Posts were made on the schools exchange group on facebook.

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

If you want to guarantee your classes, take obscure ones. Otherwise, econ classes are easy to get into because most people are studying Law, International relations, or politics.

Academic Experience

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

Classes are generally more interesting as they are on more specialized topics than at Victoria. The experience exceeded my expectations.

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 very good It was more engaging than Victoria (Class participation was part of most grades). The workload was less but it was more self directed study as there was less tutorials.

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?

4-5 classes is about right. 5 isn't too much and is still less hours per week than Victoria due to less tutorials. I would recommend the class economics of the EU. It was interesting to learn about the economy where you are living.

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

Participate in class discussions and do all assignments. Self directed study is important to do or you will fall behind.

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

The library is always full. It is very hard to find a seat. Internet access was good. There were imacs in the library which was great, just remember the keyboards have a different layout.

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?

All of my courses were taught in English, but I learned some basic French beforehand. There are normal French classes taught by the university, but I did not take one.

E: Accommodation

What form of accommodation did you stay in?

Studio apartment

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

Pros

Cheapest place I ever saw.

Very close to the university.

Cons

No room mates.

Very small- no proper kitchen, toilet in the hallway.

What accommodation would you recommend to future students?

Shared apartments if you can find them. Something close to the campus.

How early can you move into accommodation?

I moved in 2 weeks after classes began so I had to stay in an Air bnb and hostel before that.

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

Small hotplate and kettle available in my apartment. The university has cheap meals that were satisfying.

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

All housing is off campus. Look on the SciencesPo lodgments website, as well as takemyflat.fr

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

Take anything you can get. There is huge competition.

F: Personal & Cultural Connections

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

Very easy to make friends with international students. No body knows each other at the start and everyone is in the same position. None of my classes were in French, so I did not make many local friends.

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

Very easy. Most people in Paris speak English and are actually friendly if you are not rude to them.

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

What parts of the culture did you most appreciate?

The food and wine is so much better. Wine and beer is also much cheaper than NZ.

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

No differently to anyone else or to home.

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 did not notice anything that would be a problem.

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?

Do a sport. It's a good way to meet both international and local students.

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

Go to other places in France on weekends, maybe another country in the break.

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

I was not aware of any.

What volunteer or internship opportunities were there for students?

5 things to take to your host country or region

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| 1 | Camera. |
| 2 | A debit card that doesn't charge fees. |
| 3 | Formal clothing. |
| 4 | Something from home for your international friends. |
| 5 | Lots of money. |

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

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| 1 | Do the welcome program, even if it costs a lot. That's where you make a lot of friends. |
| 2 | Do classes with group projects so you meet more people. |
| 3 | The workload is much less than everyone there tells you. |
| 4 | Don't stress over your grades. |
| 5 | Meet as many people as you can. |

Top 5 Things to do

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

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| 1 | The welcome program |
| 2 | Play a sport or join a club. |
| 3 | Eat some snails with your new friends. |
| 4 | Eat lots of fresh baguettes. |
| 5 | Visit all the museums for free with your student ID. |

H: Personal Experience

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

My exchange experience was probably the best semester of Uni I had. The workload wasn't huge and there was a lot to do in Paris. I lived 2 minutes from campus and had friends in lots of different areas so exploring the city was easy. Weekends were never dull when you can visit any museum in Paris for free, and most monuments too. When the mid term break came, I joined some friends and managed to see four different countries in just over a week. When it came time to say goodbye, nobody wanted to leave their new friends and everyone promised to keep in touch so they could meet up again in the future

